



*DIVINE VITAMIN
OF THE
HUMAN SOUL*

A DISCUSSION CLUB TEXT
WITH QUESTIONNAIRE

by
ALOYSIUS Mc.DONOUGH, C.P., D.D.



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GRACE

Divine Vitamin of the Human Soul

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FOREWORD

IN the Christian life, grace is a reality of the supernatural order, just as health is a reality of the natural order. The Venerable Cardinal Mercier calls grace "a spiritual quality infused into our souls by Jesus Christ, which penetrates our inmost being, instils itself into the very MARROW OF THE SOUL and goes forth (through the virtues) to all its faculties." Here is an analogy taken from bodily health which helps the Christian to grasp more easily the idea of grace, and its necessity for right living.

The author of this brochure has taken pains to carry out this analogy to some length, in terms that are quite familiar to the average reader who finds them used so often in current literature, in advertisements and in radio talks on health and the things that make for health. His lofty and evident motive to give a wholesome spiritual turn to the reader's ordinary, even meager, knowledge on bodily health is a happy one, and cannot fail to open new vistas in the field of the supernatural, and bring the thoughtful Christian to the practical conclusion that he must have at least as much concern for the health of his soul as for the health of his body.

Couched in popular language, devoid of technicalities, the author's message will undoubtedly appeal to a great multitude of readers, who will discover to their satisfaction and edification that, after all, grace is not a thing abstract and technical, but a tremendous reality, eminently concrete and practical, and above all health-producing and health-conserving for the soul. May this brochure achieve its sublime purpose of helping many an earnest, even perplexed, soul a little farther on the way of sound spiritually healthy living.

✠ WILLIAM A. GRIFFIN,
Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Newark.

" . . . And a small drop of ink,
Falling, like dew, upon a thought produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions
think."
(Byron.)

NOWADAYS, health education is not confined to the physician. Physical and psychological health is a featured topic in the daily paper. The maintenance of health postpones deterioration and death, improves efficiency, and makes life more enjoyable. No wonder the health columns are read attentively and eagerly!

Over and above our health of body and mind, it is only normal that we maintain a religious health of soul. God has destined us to develop as *supermen*, for His *World of Tomorrow*. To enable us achieve that destiny, God has equipped the soul with a 'religious anatomy.' For the soul's diet, He has provided the essential vitamin called *grace*. With grace, the soul enjoys health: without grace, the soul is sick unto death.

It has been the stupid vogue, to avoid public discussion of grace, on the flimsy plea that the subject is too profound, too involved for the layman. Hardly so, when health of soul depends so much upon the vitamin of grace. Since grace is indispensable to the superman, an education on the subject must be feasible. Divine Providence has revealed ample data concerning grace. The Teaching Church has transmitted that information faithfully. Granting a moderate expenditure of time and effort, we disciples can learn what our divine Master has taught. "It hurts to think," but 'growing pains' are an indication of progress.

A. McD.

GOD'S WORLD OF TOMORROW

Lay That Ghost!

THERE is a ghost that haunts every man, woman, and child who is religiously immature. That ghost is a suspicion. It whispers to the human mind and heart that, God and the affairs of the soul—though highly important—are lacking in human appeal. On earth, churchgoing is tedious: heaven is equivalent to an eternal session in church! Well and good for the angels, but excessively spiritual for flesh and blood! Heaven is an unspeakably grand prospect, but is it enjoyable *humanly*?

Suspicion of that sort is a mere phobia—an empty fear. Yet, by dulling man's interest in things religious, by dampening his enthusiasm, that suspicion as to the desirability of holiness, does untold harm. Generally speaking, we succeed best of all in undertakings that we find congenial. It is, therefore, advisable strategy—at the very outset of our discussions—to eliminate any suspicion that would cool intense interest in the study of grace.

Man's development along religious lines is, for the most part, a spiritual process. Yet this type of progress is not distasteful, provided we be at all mature. As youngsters, we specialized in activities that are enjoyable in a bodily way—romping, eating, and so on. Gradually but surely, we came to realize our equipment for another type of enjoyable activity—for thought and love. Besides a palate, and arms and legs wherewith to turn handsprings, we have a mind for thinking, we have a will for loving and for self-decision. These abilities are at the same time appetites—the mind hungers for knowledge, the will is athirst for lovable things. Nothing else is so enjoyable to a man as to exercise these abilities successfully, there is no distress comparable to that of an empty mind and heart.

To the point—thought and love are twin activities that make us *spiritual*. The vegetable can grow, but cannot even see and hear, smell and taste, and feel as the dumb animal

does. We grow, we sense things in the five ways a mere animal can, but over and above that sort of thing, we are equal to what is done by angels and even by God—we are capable of thoughtful love. This is only another way of saying that, *to be human is to be spiritual!* Since the spiritual man is simply the type of person who has matured as a thoughtful lover, spiritual activity is natural to us and should be enjoyable.

In putting our spiritual abilities to work, we are somewhat hampered by obstacles—hindrances which can, however, be overcome. Disrelish in the exercise of our mind and will is often the result of a mere lack of development. For example, some athletes would exhaust their bodies in the stadium, yet shrink from ten minutes of studious thought! With men of that type, the mind is below par owing to disuse. For a similar reason, it is difficult to convince a pugilist as to the enjoyability of literature—his mental appetite needs whetting. Then, too, our minds can be dissatisfied for want of worth-while nourishment, just as we are disappointed in ugly sights, in discordant music, in unfit food. The mind and will crave truth and goodness. Lastly, the mind may be—so to speak—groping in the dark, in need of enlightenment, just as bodily eyes need glasses for the improvement of vision. Strain is irksome. Briefly, there is no handicap of mind or will that cannot be hurdled, enabling us to enjoy thought and love, to develop the *spiritual* abilities that make us *human* and humanly happy.

When a human mind and heart are stimulated by divine grace, a man is so improved upon—even here on earth—that he becomes a *superman*. He is as human as ever, though plus his betterment. Grace equips a man with superhuman ability, for thought, love, and joy of a divine sort. Grace is a tonic that bestirs an appetite for divine things; it furnishes the mind with a preview of God's own secrets; it energizes the heart with longing and hope for God's *World of Tomorrow*; it gladdens the superman by a foretaste of his heavenly treat. Without grace, without heaven—lest we shy away from our development as religious supermen, it is necessary that we dissolve all suspicion as to the desirability of heavenly grace. Let us proceed to "lay that ghost," making place for the *Holy Ghost!*

What Are the Prospects?

In a certain sense, it is correct to say that every man is selfish and should be selfish. Self-love is instinctive to each of us: the instinct has been implanted in every human heart by our Maker. How queer it would be, did a man not have an appetite for his own welfare! There is, then, such a thing as well-ordered selfishness.

Our Creator has not only given us an appetite for personal happiness—He has made it feasible to satisfy that appetite. In His providence, God has provided man with ample opportunity for the well-being of both soul and body. Since God is the Author of the human body no less than of the soul, He cannot be indifferent to the prosperity of His own handiwork. Anyone at all conversant with sacred history realizes how provident God has been toward us and that this topsy-turvy world has been spoilt by man himself. For a moment, gaze toward the future.

During 1939, New York will be a focal point of this world. Millions will visit the New York World's Fair, to study the most up-to-date exhibition of human progress, the latest expression of human hopes for the *World of Tomorrow*. Many will fail to recognize the Temple of Religion as the most significant edifice amid that monumental city. Thus to fail is to miss the point, in any such Exposition of Progress. And a shocking number of 'students' will miss the point, because ignorant or forgetful of the first three chapters of sacred history. Now gaze backward, toward the past.

Once upon eternity, there was a World's Fair. Never since has there been such a display of science, art, and inventive genius. For the guidance of posterity, the Architect has revealed a pen-picture, so clear that even a child can understand it. A quotation from the original: "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth . . . and all the furniture of them. God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good."¹ God planned a universe of created things. All other planets are hand-maiden to Mother Earth: on earth, man is governor of all else. "Let him have dominion over the whole earth." The reason for God's 'partiality' to man is clear: "Let

¹ We urge the student to read thoughtfully the first three chapters of Genesis.

us make man to our own image and likeness. And God created man *to His own image*. The Lord God formed man (man's body) of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure, wherein He placed man." Amid all creation, man is the masterpiece, the favorite—because of his human soul. And—*religious health of soul was the pivotal factor in all human well-being*.

As long as man stayed loyal to God, his welfare of soul and body was assured. During that heyday, man was not handicapped by ignorance; there was no conflict between the appetites of soul and body; suffering was unheard of, as well as toil and danger; death was unknown. Remarkable though it was, such physical and psychological health was a mere by-product of God's grace. Grace was the gifted equipment that elevated man to the status of a superman. By grace, a mere creature became an adopted child of God, of a Maker who deigned to father him. In fact, the original World's Fair, called Paradise, was only a small-scale model of the City of God in the *World of Tomorrow*—of that heaven of which "glorious things are said,"² and where "the dwelling is of all rejoicing." To be a child of God was worth while—a long, long while!

But "sin entered into this world."³ By rejecting God's grace, man spurned His Maker and Father, and cheated himself of his normal destiny. Were it not for man's own mismanagement, there would be no need for hospital, or cemetery, or penitentiary. The prospect of paradise here and heaven hereafter would not have collapsed. Indeed, we might be unforgiven to this day, were it not for our rank as children of God. Prompted by a fatherly love, God sent among us His eternal Son, to shed His blood in atonement, that by a unique 'blood transfusion' we might once again be animated by the vitamin of grace. The prospects are as appealing as ever, for soul and body, thanks to God and His grace!

² Psalm lxxxvi. 3, 7.

³ Romans v. 12.

Go to Sources!

Men there are for whom such a prospect has little or no appeal. With that type of man, even to dwell on the subject brings on a headache. A more thorough diagnosis might reveal heartache, for it is not normal to cheat oneself of superhuman ability and superhuman happiness. There are two things that account for man's want of enthusiasm about heaven and the grace that guarantees heaven. Neither blunder is complimentary to man, inclined though we are to preen ourselves as wise executives. First of all, a man can be so poor a strategist as not to 'go to sources' for whatever is worth while. Then, too, a man can be such a wiseacre as not to recognize the desirability of being a child of God. Presently, we shall consider the desirability of the heaven, to which the child of God is heir. For the moment, let us focus attention upon the advisable strategy of seeking benefits at their very source.

It stands to reason that when we possess a source of delight, in such a way as to enjoy it thoroughly, we are better off than if we enjoy merely some few products of that source. Is not the whole greater and more enjoyable than a part? But God is the original and inexhaustible Source of all enjoyable products; hence, intimate association with God is the most enjoyable attainment possible to a man.

The sound strategy of seeking benefits at their very source, is exemplified even among criminals. For example, the counterfeiter is shrewd enough to 'mint' money rather than wait for it in dribblets. Whether things, places, or persons, and no matter how enjoyable—God is the Source. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made."⁴ "But all men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God: who by these good things that are seen, have not acknowledged who was the workman; let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they; for the first Author of beauty made all those things!"⁵ Other enjoyable items are as mere mist, wafted to man from the torrential Source—from God who is Heaven. Created perfections are only piecemeal imitations of an Original, who

⁴ John i. 3.

⁵ Wisdom xiii. 1, 3.

alone is flawless and enjoyable without disappointment. No sound business man can afford not to 'go to sources,' no man in his right senses will neglect to plan for heaven. But heaven is in prospect only to the child of God, to the superman who thrives on the vitamin called grace.

Surprise Party

In response to the instinct for well-ordered self-love, men blunder by not 'going to sources.' There is another type of man who fails himself and whom we have stigmatized as 'wiseacre.' Dictionaries define a wiseacre as one "who affects great wisdom but who is, in reality, a dunce—a stupid or ignorant person." Such indeed is any man who will not admit the desirability of heaven, to which the 'child of grace' is heir.

Heaven has been well described as "perfect in the aggregation of all good things."⁶ This description is justified, for God's Revelation about our heaven is comparatively ample, and other data stand to reason. It is absurd to say that we are 'know-nothings' concerning heaven. Our advance knowledge of heaven furnishes abundant inducement to well-ordered selfishness. Of course, heaven would not be ideal, did it not surpass our expectations, if here and now we knew all about it. The element of even unexpected delight is the 'finishing touch' that makes a surprise party unique. And heaven will be a surprise party in the sense that St. Paul affirms: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him!"⁷

It will stimulate our enthusiasm toward heaven, to realize some of its attractive features. Chiefly, though by no means exclusively, heaven will gratify our human soul. It takes a body as well as a soul, to constitute a man; yet, the soul is the nobler element in our make-up—the element which renders us superior to the vegetable, and to the animal that is not human. Our spiritual appetites are keen and crave their proper nourishment—truth for the mind, true goodness for the will. There is no human deformity so pitiable as that of spiritual equipment out of gear—an insane person, for example,

⁶ Boethius.

⁷ 1 Cor. ii, 9.

or even a simpleton. This realization gives us a clue to the importance of our spiritual abilities. More pitiable than any such deformity, is the soul who undergoes a living death, starved for want of religious knowledge and love. To the point—in the Church Triumphant, the human soul is gratified to the full, by unhampered intimacy with the very Source of truth and goodness. Thus does heaven guarantee prosperity of soul. “Peace to men of good will,”⁸ is a divine promise that God fulfills partially on earth, wholly in heaven where “my soul shall be delighted in his salvation.”

God does always the appropriate thing. How fitting that our body share in the reward that is heaven! During our probation on earth, body and soul dwell together—they belong together. Our bodily senses—sight, hearing, and the like—furnish the mind and will with material for thought and love. The soul uses the body as an instrument to carry out its plans and purposes. One of the early events in God’s *World of Tomorrow* is our resurrection—the recovery of our own bodies. Bodily death is only a temporary condition: we shall spend eternity in either hell or heaven—soul *and* body.

Revelation abounds in detail that removes all doubt as to heavenly provision for bodily welfare. For example, “They shall not hunger nor thirst.”⁹ “There the wearied in strength are at rest.”¹⁰ The divine Physician will eliminate human infirmity: “Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free.”¹¹ “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow.”¹² Just as surely as our Risen Saviour is happy, we too shall be happy, for He discarded the tomb and ascended into heaven to “prepare a place for you.”¹³

From infancy onward, each one of us lives in association with others. Mutually, we influence one another’s salvation. Heaven will be peopled—not with beatified hermits—but with ‘career men and women’ who rejoice together, the union-in-common or Communion of Saints. Parents will enjoy the company of their children, husbands will rejoice with wives,

⁸ Luke ii. 14.

¹¹ Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

⁹ Isaiah xlix. 10.

¹² Apoc. xxi. 4.

¹⁰ Job iii. 17.

¹³ John xiv. 3.

canonized saints with their clients from the Church Militant, souls from purgatory with those who hastened their entry into the Church Triumphant. Surely the prospect of heaven is a 'temptation' that a man of faith cannot resist! Is there, then, any reason for a forced enthusiasm toward heaven? ¹⁴

God is under no obligations to man. Hence, God did not have to share heaven with us. That He promised to do so, was sheer generosity, in the first place. Man was so brazen as to reject that offer. That God extend to us a second opportunity—above all at the expense of His eternal Son—no human word can describe such divine mercy! The treasure recovered for us by our Saviour, is divine grace. Withdraw the human soul and the body becomes a corpse: withdraw the vitamin of grace and the soul becomes lifeless as a child of God and an heir to heaven. To be supermen for God's *World of Tomorrow*, we must be vitalized by grace. "By the grace of God I am what I am." ¹⁵

¹⁴ "Wanted—A Perfect Heaven," McDonough, C.P., *American Ecclesiastical Review*, January, 1937, p. 35.

¹⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Questions

1. What are the advantages of mental and bodily health? What do you understand by religious health of soul?
2. Why is disrelish for spiritual activities, a sign of human immaturity?
3. Explain the statement: To be human is to be spiritual.
4. What motive prompts our study of heaven, prior to that of grace?
5. Defend well-ordered selfishness. What is the connection between that instinct of ours, and God's World of Tomorrow?

6. What main issues are revealed for human guidance, in the first three chapters of sacred history? Do you find eight such items?
7. Explain the strategy of going to sources for what is worth while.
8. What provision does heaven guarantee to the human soul? to the human body?
9. What is wrong with leadership that is irreligious, or even unreligious?
10. To what did St. Paul point, in accounting for his success as a 'career' man?

DIET FOR SUPERMEN

Two Types of Health

LOCATED in Rochester, Minn., is the Mayo Clinic. This health center consists of an elaborate network of hotels, clinics, hospitals, and diet kitchens—all connected underground, one with another. The Mayo Foundation is world-wide in fame and service. Its reputation and success are the result of skill plus thoroughness. The prompting spirit in every department is that of respect for human health.

Health, in general, consists of *organic and functional soundness*. In a fully equipped hospital, provision is made for those who are ill in body and in soul. The bodily patient is treated by way of medicine and surgery, for the improvement of physical health. The so-called mental patient (whose ailment may involve mind or will, or both) is treated by way of psychiatry, for the improvement of psychological health. Fittingly, we classify both physical and psychological health as *natural*—that is to say, these two sorts of health are characteristic of a sound man. To enjoy natural health of body and of soul is simply to have a constitution that is in proper condition, that serves its human purpose. A complete breakdown of psychological health turns a man into an imbecile: complete breakdown of physical well-being results in a corpse. Natural health is not, then, an extra: though precious, it is as typical of a man as lungs, heart and the like.

Over and above natural health, there is such a thing as *supernatural health*. As God Himself has revealed to us, this type of health is religious, and is centered chiefly in the soul, although—as we shall explain later—the body is included. However, it is not the same thing at all as physical health of body, or psychological health of soul. This kind of organic and functional soundness is a perfection superior to all other sorts of health. It is a distinct type, so excellent as to elevate mere men to the rank of supermen. Hence, it is classified fittingly, as *supernatural*. Ever since God blessed man with this type of health, it is quite normal that we foster and enjoy it. But this improvement in our well-being is not natural to

us: it is an extra. Supernatural health is so exalted a perfection that, no creature—man or angel even—could of himself develop it. Only God can give it and that He do so is an out and out gift, a sheer bounty.

Two Types of Illness

No man, gifted by God with supernatural health, can lose that benefit except through his own fault. Such a loss is the most injurious a man can sustain. To incur it, is religious suicide. Bereft of this health, we are quarantined from God's own family. A mere man who could be, and should be a superman, is a monstrosity. To realize all this, is to appreciate the importance of *grace*—the vitamin essential to supernatural diet.

From infancy until death, body and soul maintain an unbroken partnership. Mutually, they ward off deterioration and harm, they foster well-being and content. It is inevitable that, sooner or later, this partnership be dissolved: soul will depart from body, whereupon the latter dies. Before that event, however, both soul and body are susceptible to manifold affliction. Simply because human efficiency and gladness are thereby thwarted, any ailment is repugnant. However, some infirmities are comparatively trivial, while others are grave. Bodily growth may be so retarded as to result in a pygmy. To have soundless ears or sightless eyes is a sad plight: so too, a leaking heart or perforated lungs. But within the sphere of *natural* health, no tragedy can compare with insanity. That affliction impairs the soul, depriving a man of his spiritual excellence: it extinguishes human thought, love, and joy. The more precious a benefit, the more expensive and repulsive is its loss. With solid reason, then, we shun physical and—even more so—psychological illness. However, a complete breakdown of *supernatural* health is the most tragic plight of all. Our religious fitness is superhuman—as superior to natural health as heaven is to earth. To enjoy supernatural fitness is to share in *God's own health*: To lose it, is to reduce oneself 'below par,' to cheat soul and body of the best—by the worst type of suicide.

The Church on earth we might liken to a well-organized hospital. Its Founder is the divine Physician, Jesus Christ. He

is concerned over the health of all men and women, all of whom are patients, whether they realize it or not. Although the symptoms vary, as well as degrees of illness, the ailment is common to all—our religious health is below par. The divine Physician has made a correct diagnosis, for it is He who has given us whatever health we enjoy—be it natural or supernatural. In the diagnosis of a case, in planning the recovery of a patient, physicians are guided by the ‘case history.’ The record of the past shows the contrast between a patient’s normal health and actual conditions; it furnishes a clue to the cause of illness, and thereby indicates the sort of treatment called for. An acquaintance with our own history enables us to co-operate intelligently with our divine Physician.

Our Case History

From both the Old Testament and the New, we learn the following facts. God is—so to speak—brimful of perfections and joy. He shared that perfection and joy with us, in two ways. First of all, He established us as human beings: secondly, He promoted us as supermen—no longer mere creatures but likewise adopted children. As *men*, He gave us our human make-up. That consists of soul and body, plus many abilities which are at the same time appetites for pleasure. Thus we are equipped to relish food, aromas, music, and so on: thus too, we are equipped for enjoyable thought and love. As *supermen*, He so improved our human make-up as to fit us for joy of a *divine* type. That improvement we refer to as our ‘supernatural make-up,’ ‘our religious anatomy.’ It consists of additional perfection of soul, plus corresponding abilities and appetites for joy. We are thereby equipped to relish the very things that render God Himself so flawlessly happy. Soon, we shall explain in detail the divine qualities bestowed upon supermen by the God of Joy: for the moment, we simply refer to those perfections as the ‘equipment of grace.’

Early in this chapter, we stated that religious health, though centered chiefly in the soul, includes the body also. This is appropriate, because body and soul live together during the time before bodily death, and eternally after the resurrection. When establishing us as supermen, God made special provision,

so that bodily welfare would harmonize with our new health of soul. He did so by exempting us from bodily death; from illness, suffering and danger; by eliminating labor of a toilsome, wearying sort. Moreover, as a result of this 'tonic,' the body was predisposed to co-operate with the soul—an ideal alliance for the advancement of mutual interests. In the furtherance of knowledge, God Himself tutored man. No mere man could acquire such benefits: only God could bestow them. Even though not of a *supernatural* type, such privileges were truly extras, and are classified as *preternatural* gifts. Without a whit of exaggeration, then, the citizens of Paradise were *supermen*! And Paradise was only a prelude to Heaven:

What folly on the part of man and woman, to deprive themselves of their superhuman excellence! Is it not literally true that such a loss is the most serious that we can sustain? Is it not suicide of the worst type? The degraded superman is, indeed, a monstrosity—a divine masterpiece frustrated by self ruination! What a shock to experience the poignant contrast between a superman's joy and an outcast's distress! "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God. And to the woman He said: I will multiply thy sorrows: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. And to Adam He said: Cursed is the earth in thy work; in labor and in toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken. And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure." ¹

Tragic enough that man should bring upon himself such manifold damage—loss of his *preternatural* welfare—but worst of all, as a *child of God*, man turned prodigal! A benevolent Father, eager to reward His adopted favorite, was constrained to punish him. "Because thou hast done this thing!" ² In exchange for counterfeit goods, man contemned his *supernatural* standing and prospects, and the One who had thus gifted him. Logically, he lost his own share in God's health and joy. Adam had been appointed by God, as custodian of superhuman health both for himself *and* for all posterity. Hence we of today, as his *offspring*, are born bereft of the privileged health

¹ Genesis iii. 8, 16, 17, 23.

² Genesis iii. 14.

that is normal to us. Thus it is that we inherit, instead, illness. Apropos of this hereditary illness, St. Paul writes: "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death . . . by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners."³ The first step toward recovery must be the realization that we *are* ill, that we *need* the ministrations of a divine Physician.

In 'headline style,' we have sketched our case history, in order to mark the contrast between normal health and the illness that we have contracted. Men of good will, by co-operation with the Second Adam, recover their health—partially on earth, fully in heaven. Men of ill will fail to do so, choosing to lull their distress by resort to the drugs of pleasure. Under the leadership of statesmen, financiers, war lords, scholars, or physicians, men endeavor to extricate themselves from the consequences of the 'original depression.' A few years ago, at Harvard, they planned even a group of 'supermen'—a revival of the old Spartan ambition, though with emphasis on intellectual development, rather than on muscular. Such attempts are futile, simply because their sponsors ignore the Second Adam, who alone is competent to undo the harm wrought by the First Adam. And they ignore the divine Physician, simply because they do not admit that the root-cause of all human distress is *religious*.

Our case history reveals also that religious health is the controlling factor in man's welfare. To the type of illness called *sin*, we can trace all earthly affliction, as well as the unbearable exile of eternal hell. "Know thou and see, that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God."⁴ "Your iniquities have turned these things away, your sins have withholden good things from you."⁵ "You have forgotten God who brought you up."⁶ "Your iniquities have divided between you and your God."⁷ "Depart from Me, ye cursed!"⁸

To eliminate evil effects, sound strategy dictates that we eliminate their *cause*. Since all evils were introduced into this world by original sin, we must rid ourselves first of all, of that root-disease. We must recover our *supernatural* health. From that point onward, we must maintain our religious health as

³ Romans v. 12, 19.

⁴ Jeremias ii. 19.

⁵ Jeremias v. 25.

⁶ Baruch iv. 8.

⁷ Isaias lix. 2.

⁸ Matt. xxv. 41.

intact as possible—by guarding against the ‘relapse’ known as personal sin. To counteract any germ, we must use a specific antidote. Against the germs of original sin and personal sin, God has provided an antidote. He sent the medication from heaven to earth, sending also His divine Son as Physician. At His own expense, Christ administers to every man of good will, the supernatural antidote called GRACE. He does so, by transfusing to us the salutary benefits of His own Blood—teeming as it is with the supernatural vitamin of grace. “Of His fulness we all have received, and grace for grace.”⁹ “The wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹⁰

Nutrition—Diet—Vitamin

Even a lifeless engine cannot run without fuel. Its various parts may be intact, and properly connected, but to function and serve its purpose, the engine must be ‘fed.’ This need for nourishment is true especially, in the case of things that are alive. Plants, animals, men—all need nourishment, in order to thrive and to replenish any expended energy. In any case, nourishment must be fitted to the appetites that crave it. For example, we cannot support the human soul with bodily fare. The soul hungers for psychological nutriment—for truth and goodness. So too, nutrition for supermen must be of a supernatural type. Nothing inferior will do. Regulated nutrition, we call diet. Diet excludes whatever is harmful or useless, and includes whatever is beneficial. In providing beneficial nutrition, a diet is planned out on the basis of vitamin-content. In the case of bodily diet, a vitamin is an ingredient that is essential to nourishment, and thus essential to health and life. As a matter of fact, vitamins are conveyed to the body not only in food but in other ways,—such as pure air, and sunshine. Hence, nutrition and vitamins are not terms that must be restricted, so to bespeak food alone.

Grace is a psychological vitamin, of supernatural force. It has a twofold action. As an antidote, it counteracts the germ called sin. As nutriment, it furnishes the soul with the kind of thought and love that gladdens God Himself. The soul of

⁹ John i. 16.

¹⁰ Romans vi. 23.

the superman will thrive or languish, in proportion to his fidelity or infidelity to this diet. No child of God can afford to neglect this divine vitamin. As an aftermath of original sin, we are weak. We are susceptible daily, to the germ of personal sin. We begin to be supermen, when we are "born again"¹¹ by the grace of Baptism: but, our Father in Heaven expects us to develop, to become robust, to enjoy life. Each one of us, He exhorts tenderly: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus."¹²

¹¹ John iii. 3.

¹² 2 Tim. ii. 1.

Questions

1. What do you understand by health, in general?
2. Explain the difference between natural and preternatural health. Clarify your explanation by giving examples of each type of health.
3. What does supernatural health consist of?
4. What do you imply, when you say that it is normal to be a superman, though not natural?
5. Why is the loss of supernatural health the most tragic plight we can suffer?
6. What guidance is found in the case history of a patient?
7. Summarize the sacred history of our original health?
8. From the same source, sketch the record of man's original illness.
9. Why are we of today infected with the germ of original sin? Are we susceptible to any other similar germ?
10. What is meant by antidote? by nutrition? by diet? What is a vitamin? What sort of a vitamin is grace?

THE SUPERMAN'S CONSTITUTION

Career Education

THUS far, we have considered God's *World of Tomorrow*, as the destiny in prospect for the child of God, in order to realize its desirability. We have studied also the various types of health to which we can attain, and the corresponding ailments to which we are susceptible. Thus we heightened our appreciation of the stark contrast between health and illness, we traced all human distress to its root-cause, and finally read the 'prescription' written by our divine Physician, Jesus Christ. Our next step will be to study the superman's 'religious constitution,' in order to understand the connection between that 'religious anatomy' of ours and grace as a vitamin.

Especially for beginners, a thorough study of grace is difficult. We are dealing with a religious mystery. Were it not for Revelation, we would know nothing whatever about grace. Divine Providence has planned for man a career of superhuman prosperity. This destiny, together with the means and method of meriting it, are known—somewhat technically—as the 'order of grace,' the 'supernatural economy.' Were it not for the sheer bounty of God, that destiny would be "beyond the reach" of man or angel. Hence, we must learn from a reliable source, the fact that we have a superhuman vocation, what it consists of, what means to apply and what method to follow.

With a view to intelligent and meritorious co-operation on our part, God has revealed to us ample information concerning grace. However, the subject is profound and is involved. Not until our promotion from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant, shall we understand the wonders of grace, fully. Only there and then, shall we experience the gratification of success, of arrival at destination. Here and now, we strive, we journey. But God has revealed to us the divine things that concern us, in a human way. With available data, we can gain a respectable understanding of grace. New ideas and new vocabulary should not deter us. Presumably, we bring to the study of our own superhuman career, the attention and patience—let us say—of a medical student, in his study of the human make-up and its function. A thorough understanding

of what is worth while, engenders enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is a tonic we need, as we "press toward the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God, in Christ Jesus."¹

Our superhuman destiny is not only a wonderful thing in itself, not only an appealing prospect to a man, but is God's own reason for His fatherly attitude towards us. It is our rank as supermen that bridges over the gap between Creator and creature. As supermen, we are permitted to share in God's own perfections. "That . . . you may be made partakers of the divine nature!"² This resemblance between Him and us, is the basis that fits us for adoption as children, for dealing with Him on terms of friendship. He would have been—so to speak—extravagant, to provide for mere men, the marvels and mercies of Bethlehem, of Calvary, of the Mass-altar. Man's divine sonship is a factor that made his crime the more disgraceful, yet the more forgiveable. Ask the parent of a wayward child—no one else may have the same viewpoint,—but then, the child is his own! "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, taking pity on thee!"³ Prompted by a fatherly love, God once more gifted man with grace, that paradise lost might become paradise regained.

We add another preliminary thought for the encouragement of the student. There is a resemblance between our natural anatomy or constitution, and our supernatural constitution. This similarity enables us to explain supernatural health, in an illustrative way, by references to natural health. Furthermore, the connection between the two brings home to us the realization that religious health is something intimate to us, in a personal way. Any man, after rebirth by grace, is still the *identical* person, the very *same* self as before—though a superior person, a better self. The superman is not as someone else—an 'outsider'—he is this man, transformed into a nobler self. Grace means *my* health, *my* gladness; its loss means *my* illness, *my* distress.

The New Man

It is no small advantage to become acquainted, as soon as possible, with the vocabulary of grace. We must attach a

¹ Phil. iii. 14.

² 2 Peter i. 4.

³ Jeremiah xxxi. 3.

definite meaning to our terms. By so doing, we convey accurate notions: by consistent references to a definite meaning, we avoid confusion.

We define grace in general, as: A supernatural (divine) gift, conceded by God to an intellectual creature, for the furtherance of that creature's supernatural life. In charting out the 'system of grace' in its entirety, the very first item to present is the Supreme Grace. God Himself, as the Benefactor of supermen, donates His own all-precious Self as our *Supreme Grace*. This Grace is the end we strive for: all other graces are but the means unto the end. Just as the Church Militant is related to the Church Triumphant as means unto end, so too all lesser graces are related to the Supreme Grace, as means conducive to our supernatural contact with God Himself.

Our course of study centers upon the graces which *lead* us to God. These lesser graces, theologians refer to at times, as 'created graces'—a formula that calls for a brief explanation. Since all grace is strictly supernatural or divine, is it a misnomer to label a grace as 'created'? St. Thomas Aquinas explains. First of all, we have to distinguish between the Supreme Grace and lesser graces; between the Gift who is God Himself, and the gifts that lead us to Him; between grace as a means and Grace as the end. Moreover, all grace is an out and out gift, a sheer donation, so exclusively divine that no creature has any claim to it whatever, or possibly could have. As a basis entitling a man to divine grace, human merit is worthless. It is as nothing. Therefore, because grace elevates a man from the 'nothingness of human merit' to a 'divine level,' we liken the accomplishment of grace to creation. Since creation is the production of something from nothing, it is appropriate to refer in this way to the promotion of the superman. Despite a 'nothingness of personal deserts,' grace constitutes a man in a totally new and superior sphere of life. This is what Christ meant, when He said: "No man can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me, draw him."⁴ In the same sense, St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "By grace you are saved, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works."⁵

⁴ John vi. 44.

⁵ Ephesians ii. 10.

In this chapter and the next, we shall discuss *habitual* grace: then, *actual* grace. We can explain the connection between these two graces, by the analogy of bodily health. For bodily health, two things are requisite,—organic *and* functional soundness. For example, all the organs of a newborn infant may be intact. But, without nourishment, those organs cannot function. If starved for want of nutriment, the organs themselves become impaired, and finally that infant body will perish. When a man is “born again” as a child of God, his soul is gifted with a religious health, consisting of an organic and a functional soundness. Habitual grace equips the child of God with the organs or ‘constitution’ of the superman. Thus he becomes, in a supernatural sense, *organically* sound. By means of actual grace, his ‘system’ is properly nourished and enabled to function. Thus his organic soundness is rounded out by a *functional* soundness.

Of course, all graces are contributory—in one way or another—to our health of soul. For this reason, we can refer to any grace as sanctifying. Sanctity and holiness are synonymous with religious health. Quite often, however, theologians identify sanctifying grace with habitual grace, in particular. The reason is as follows. A man is *fully* justified before God, fully restored as a superman, only when he attains to habitual grace. We do not imply that the superman, restored by habitual grace, is no longer in need of actual grace. He must be ‘fed’: he maintains his status as a superman, by means of actual grace. The point is that, by habitual grace, he is *constituted* a superman. To avoid confusion, we shall refer to the one grace as habitual, and to the other as actual, with the understanding that each of them is, in its own way, sanctifying.

By the process called ‘justification,’ a sinful man becomes holy: habitual grace is so sanctifying that it transforms a mere man into a superman. To be thorough, this transformation ought to improve upon three factors that go to make up a man. Those factors are his human *nature*, plus human *abilities*, plus his acquired *facility* or skill. In tally with these three natural factors, there are three *supernatural* factors. *Habitual* grace improves human nature; infused *virtues* improve

human abilities; infused *gifts* add facility or skill. When we say that these supernatural factors are infused, we mean that only God can impart them: it is beyond the competence of any creature to acquire them. We recommend that you keep side by side, the above "mental pictures" of the mere man and of the superman: to do so, will clarify a detailed 'enlargement' soon to be made, of the superman's picture.

What is human nature? And what benefit is added to the nature of a mere man by habitual grace? To distinguish a man from all different beings, we say that he is human. We classify him thus, because his essence is human. His essence is simply that which makes him *what he is*, and not something *else*. Composed of a body and a rational soul, man has a 'whatness' all his own: we label it his human essence. Now if a man is to be promoted to the status of a superman, he must receive the benefit of a superior essence, a superior whatness. This improvement is effected by habitual grace. Our human essence is not—so to speak—static, but dynamic. It exists in order to operate, to engage in appropriate activity. Considered as the wellspring of activity, human essence is known as human nature. For superior activity, the superman is equipped with supernatural virtues. But prior to this, his nature is improved upon by habitual grace. Just as a man's essence, or nature is the basis for a definite set of abilities, so too—on a superior plane—habitual grace lays the groundwork or basis for the superman's new abilities. By giving to the mere man a superior whatness, habitual grace makes him a new man. Habitual grace is a supernatural quality that tallies with our human essence, or nature. This is what the Apostle means, when he exhorts us: "Put on the *new man*, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth." ⁶

Supernatural Efficiency

Human nature is a wellspring of capability, of human accomplishment. The partnership of soul and body is highly efficient. The New York World's Fair of 1939 exemplifies that fact. There is a constant demand for useful things: in supplying that demand, we seem never to falter. It is quite obvious

⁶ Ephesians iv. 24.

then, that human efficiency spells progress and content. Logically, when human nature is endowed with habitual grace, we possess a wellspring of superior efficiency. The soul of the superman is graced with *supernatural* powers, fitting him for progress and content of a divine type. The culture that obtained during the original World's Fair, certifies to that fact.

Apart from the enjoyment that accrues to a man from *what* he produces, he finds gratification in producing—in *doing* things. For example, notice the glee of a youngster even, as day after day he discovers his various potentialities—every conscious moment he is 'up and doing.' By vigorous activity, a man lives a full life. A lazy man curtails his own joy of living: his content is a fool's paradise. Now the superman is equipped with additional, and superior means for an active, ample life. Preparatory to a fullness of joy in heaven, he begins on earth to develop his soul with superhuman efficiency. His *mind* is graced with an insight into the thoughts and wisdom of God. With a supernaturalized *will*, he fosters divine ambition, seeking "the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth." ⁷

As mere men or as supermen, our abilities serve us by a sort of 'teamwork.' By a mutual, concerted action, their efficiency is fruitful of results. For example, our eyes notify us as to the presence of something desirable: with our hands, we reach for it. If our eyes perceive the approach of something harmful, our arms ward it off. However, mere bodily teamwork is not the only efficiency at work. There is another process involved—the teamwork of mind and will. In the example just given, the eyes notify the mind: the mind reasons, and judges as to benefit or harm: the mind then notifies the will, advising the will to accept or reject: the will then directs a bodily instrument, such as the hand, to reach out in acceptance or to reject by warding off. That teamwork—be it swift or slow—is the process whereby our abilities serve us, in every conscious step toward self-betterment.

Since a man's welfare depends upon his efficiency, it is manifestly of the first importance that our abilities be trained to serve us reliably. Our free will depends upon the mind for

⁷ Col. iii. 1, 2.

the guidance of advice. We shun evil as harmful—even though it be camouflaged as good and desirable. To discern *real* good from that which is merely apparent, to recognize whatever is *truly* good, and best for us—this is the function of the human mind. Therefore, in this connection, there is a call for two things: benefits truly conducive to our welfare and content; and, a properly conditioned mind, for reliable judgments. Finally, the will must be properly conditioned—strong, resolute in the rejection of evil, in the pursuit of good.

Now the welfare for which the child of God is destined, does not lead to ‘piecemeal, fragmentary’ benefits—such as the career and rewards of an attorney, a physician, a statesman, or that of any mere man. As a ‘child of grace,’ the superman is destined, soul and body, for a flawless and endless heaven. This prospect is the best good that even God can provide. To know that benefit for what it truly is, God improves the mind of the superman with supernatural qualities, known as intellectual virtues. To desire and attain that divine heaven, God improves the will of the superman, with supernatural qualities known as virtues of the will. Thus the superman is equipped for superior efficiency. Because of the divine caliber of his new efficiency, his merits are transmuted—he can earn a divine recompense.

Questions

- 1. What is meant by the order of grace, or the supernatural economy?**
- 2. What bearing has our divine sonship, upon God’s redemptive plans?**
- 3. How do you define grace, in general?**
- 4. Explain what is meant by the Supreme Grace, and by lesser graces.**
- 5. Why is it appropriate to refer to the lesser graces, as created?**
- 6. What is the difference between organic and functional health?**

7. Name the three factors of which a mere man consists. Name the three supernatural factors which make the superman organically sound.
8. What do you understand by human essence? by human nature?
9. What is the connection between the essence or nature of a mere man, and habitual grace?
10. Explain the teamwork of mind and will, in the working out of human efficiency. What two sets of supernatural factors make the efficiency of the superman superior to that of a mere man?

MORE ABOUT ORGANIC HEALTH

Theological Virtues

WE do not strive after an objective, unless we first desire it. We do not desire it, until the mind has 'made a report,' as to whether the objective is desirable and worth while striving for. The superman's normal objective comprises many items, to all of which we refer in a general way, as the *heavenly* enjoyment of God. For the moment, the point to be emphasized is this—our heavenly enjoyment of God surpasses that which any mere creature could attain to. Our objective is so superior that, no mere man could even desire it hopefully. Indeed, no mere man could so much as know about it! Therefore, we need first of all, three supernatural powers, enabling us to *know* our objective *adequately*, to *desire* it *hopefully*, and to *strive* for it *successfully*. With these powers, the "new man" is equipped.

The virtue of *faith*: by means of this infused ability, we are enabled to know our destiny. The use or exercise of this ability is the act of faith. By an act of faith we recognize the authority of God as a reliable Revealer; then, relying upon His testimony as our evidence, we accept as true all that He has revealed to us. This is the first step, in our co-operation with the God of Heaven, as emphasized by the Council of Trent. Faith is the "beginning of human salvation, the foundation and the root of all justification."¹

The virtue of *hope*: by means of this infused ability, we are enabled to desire our destiny hopefully. The exercise of this virtue is the act of hope. With a view to ultimate success, it will not do, merely to desire an objective: we desire many things that are hopeless of attainment. But we do not strive, unless there be a well-founded hope of success. In this case, we desire our objective hopefully, building our hopes upon the sacred promises of God as revealed. "For He is faithful that hath promised."² "Whatsoever He has promised, He is able also to perform."³

The virtue of *charity* (or *love*): by means of this infused ability, we are enabled to do freely and well, whatever is consistent with our faith and our hope. The exercise of this power

¹ Session vi. ch. 8.

² Hebrews x. 23.

³ Romans iv. 21.

is the act of love. To have an attitude of charity toward God, to love the God of Heaven is to serve Him—that is to say, to do willingly what He wills us to do. Thus we are ‘of one mind and heart’ with God, which is the perfection of love. Hence, by our faithful service of God, we demonstrate our love for Him. Thus we complete our co-operation with Him, revealed to us as the God of our Heaven. “He that keepeth His word, in him in very deed the charity of God is perfected.” ⁴

Faith is a temporary virtue—one that the superman will not need in the Church Triumphant. In heaven, we shall know God so thoroughly as not to depend on His testimony. We shall ‘see for ourselves.’ “We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then, face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known.” ⁵ For the time being, “we walk by faith and not by sight.” ⁶ To the superman on probation, the virtue of faith is as precious—even more so than bodily eyes or mental perception of a merely human sort. “Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him.” ⁷ No wonder that even the Apostles besought Christ: “Increase our Faith!” ⁸

Hope also is a temporary virtue. We hope for a thing when we do not as yet possess it. In heaven, we shall have taken full possession of our “reward exceeding great”: ⁹ there will be no further need for hope. But here and now, we enjoy only a foretaste of what awaits us as “joint heirs with Christ.” ¹⁰

Charity is an eternal virtue, for love is the source of joy: the joy of heaven is guaranteed as endless and unlosable: so too, the love that begets joy. We need only know God well, to love Him enthusiastically, for love is in ratio to esteem. Hence our love will be intensified when “we shall see Him *as He is*.” ¹¹ Heaven will be an eternal ‘romance,’ for the child of God is heir to “that perfect good which totally gratifies the rational appetites.” ¹² In heaven, beatifying love attains an un-earthly climax. That our eternal rendezvous with God will be an ‘affair of the heart,’ is clear from the words of Christ Him-

4 1 John ii. 5.

7 Hebrews xi. 6.

10 Romans viii. 17.

5 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

8 Luke xvii. 5.

11 1 John iii. 2.

6 2 Cor. v. 7.

9 Genesis xv. 1.

12 St. Thomas Aquinas.

self: "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." ¹³

Faith, hope, and charity are classified as 'theological virtues,' because they fit us for a contact with God that is comparatively *direct*. The terms 'theology' and 'theological' may bespeak many items—earth as well as heaven, men and angels as well as God—but the central notion, the controlling factor in any such reference, is God. Now our faith, hope, and charity are focused directly upon God—it is the Supreme Grace that we thereby know, desire, and love. This directness of contact with God by means of faith, hope, and charity, is clarified by the contrast between theological and moral virtues.

Moral Virtues

In addition to theological virtues, the superman is equipped also with infused *moral* virtues. Moral virtues fit us for a contact with God, that is comparatively *indirect*. These virtues are focused directly upon some intermediary object, which in turn leads ultimately to God. For example, the moral virtue of justice inclines us to render to everyone his due. To God is due the tribute called religion. Religion is expressed by worship. Worship consists of the adoration, gratitude, reparation, and petition due to God by man, according to the dictates of justice. This virtue leads us to God, via religion and worship. Thus our approach to God by way of a moral virtue is comparatively indirect, but none the less effectual and important.

This indirect approach to God is affected by the moral virtues in still another way. For example, justice dictates that we render what is due, not only to God, but also to our neighbor. By doing so, in compliance with the express mandate of God, we round out our service of God Himself. Justice to man centers directly upon man but ultimately—even though indirectly—upon God. "As long as you did it unto one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." ¹⁴

Our service to God is, then, both direct and indirect. To "walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called," ¹⁵ the child of God must be a man of theological virtue, and of moral

¹³ John xvi. 22.

¹⁴ Matt. xxv. 40.

¹⁵ Ephesians iv. 1.

virtue. Without the moral virtues, our equipment for the service of God would be defective. As part and parcel of the efficiency donated to the "new man," God infuses into his soul the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. The superman is thus empowered by four moral virtues, supernatural in origin, in purpose, in operation, and in merit-value. A mere man may boast of moral virtues, but in his case they are only human abilities. For the superman, the moral virtues are and must be of a supernatural caliber. These four virtues are often called the 'cardinal virtues,' because they are—so to speak—the roots of all other moral virtues. Similarly, we refer to seven vices as 'capital sins,' because each one of them can beget several 'branch vices.' The root-like importance of the cardinal virtues ought to be realized by every 'child of grace.'

To achieve success—be it heavenly or earthly—we first plan, and then carry out our plans. The mind does the planning, the will executes the plan. By means of the theological virtues, the mind and will focus directly upon God the Supreme Grace. However, besides God Himself, there are dozens of other things—'in-between items'—that have to be planned for and acted upon, in such a way as to render them conducive to our health of soul. Prudence is a moral virtue of an intellectual type, that enables us to plan all things as an heir to heaven should. Justice, fortitude, and temperance are moral virtues that aid the will to carry out our supernatural plans successfully. In view of present-day, human attempts to benefit men by a 'New Deal,' what a pity that so many are 'in the dark' as to the prospects and equipment of the "New Man!"

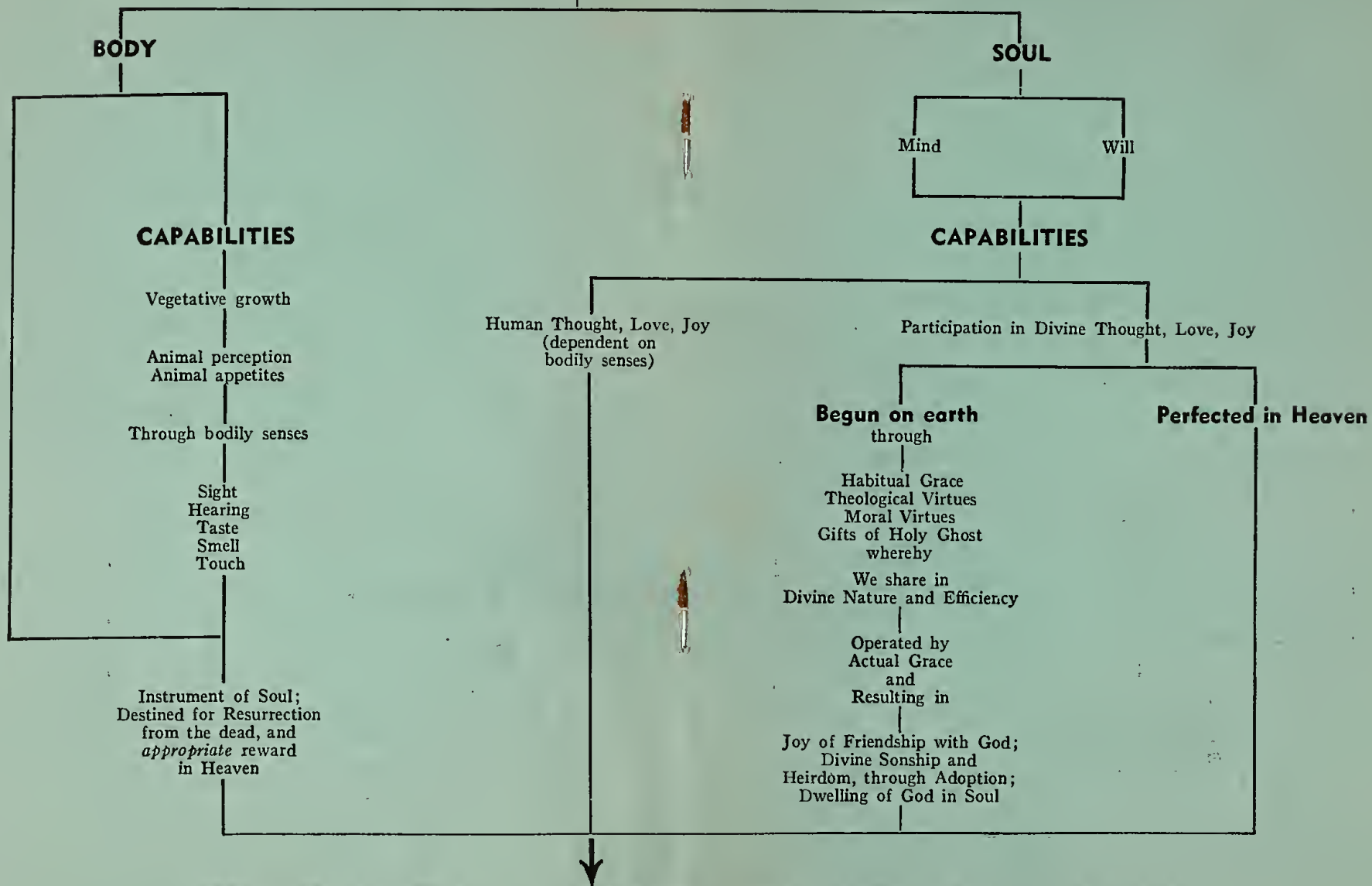
Prudence is a virtue that fits the intellect to perceive the course of action best adapted to eternal success. Prudence assigns to a position of secondary importance, the attractions of earth and time, thus enabling the superman to 'maintain his bearings,' to arrange his interests in proper perspective. The man who is supernaturally prudent is guided by the realization that, it is futile to gain even the whole world, if that success be at the expense of his immortal soul. "Blessed is the man that is rich in prudence."¹⁶

Justice is a virtue that directs the human will to render

¹⁶ Proverbs iii. 13,

DIAGRAM
of the
Christian
SUPERMAN
and his
Destiny

The Christian Superman and His Destiny



We recommend that the student consult the Diagram frequently, during his progressive study of the text, in order to maintain in correct focus, his understanding of the many items comprised under *The Christian Superman*.

to others their due. Justice, as well as fortitude and temperance, functions under the guidance of prudence. By a just attitude of will, we respect the rights of man and of God. To treat individual men rightly, is individual justice: to deal thus with groups of men, is social justice. Justice toward God is altogether unique, for no one else has the rights over us, or the claims upon our service that He has. "I made the earth: and I created man upon it."¹⁷ Hence, religion—a branch-virtue of justice—is not a matter of whim. Religious worship is an obligatory tribute due to God from man, in justice. Justice toward men, of a merely human type, is flimsy and unreliable. Especially nowadays, it is easy to realize the need for justice of a supernatural caliber. To be normal and dependable, justice must be regulated according to a superhuman norm—namely, the dignity of man as a child of God. To ignore this dignity of the child, is to impugn the Fatherhood of God. "Have we not all one Father?"¹⁸ Capital and labor engage in an endless tug of war, the League of Nations is a long standing fiasco, for want of the type of justice enjoyed only by the 'child of grace.'

Fortitude is a virtue that fortifies the human will, for the courageous maintenance of religious welfare. This virtue directs the will in proper balance, between the extremes of cowardly fear and reckless daring. Fortitude encourages the will of the superman in two ways,—for accomplishment and for endurance. To merit heaven, we must undertake difficult enterprises, overcome obstacles, and persevere to the point of accomplishment. Then too, we have frequent—perhaps incessant trials to undergo. To persevere loyal to God, in the face of deprivation and temptation, calls for special courage. The martyr, for example, is helpless to avoid or alleviate his distress: he needs greater courage than a crusader, who can strike out in self-defense by counter-attack.

Cowardly fear would demoralize a soldier of Christ. Moral paralysis of that sort is counteracted by the supernatural virtue of fortitude, wherewith every soldier member of the Church Militant is equipped. Fortitude begets patience and calm, under adversity: it steadies the fickle temperament; it

¹⁷ Isaiah xlv. 12.

¹⁸ Malachy ii. 10.

begets magnanimity—a branch-virtue that makes for nobility of spirit. The magnanimous soul undertakes even vast projects, with dauntless courage. Pius XI, of revered memory, is an outstanding example of magnanimity—his faith was intrepid. To the superman heartened by fortitude, it is no empty boast to exclaim: “Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?”¹⁹

Temperance is a virtue that moderates human inclination to sense pleasure. By temperance, bodily appetites are kept within due bounds, under the controlling influence of the soul—a soul enlightened by reason and by faith. The temperate man enjoys eating and drinking, but he “eats to live”—so to speak—whereas the glutton “lives to eat.” The disgraceful and pitiful results of intoxication exemplify the need there is, in this respect, for moderation. “He that is temperate, shall prolong life.”²⁰ The temperate man is also chaste. Chastity is a branch-virtue of temperance, and enables the child of God to control imagination and memory, to maintain purity of thought and desire, of word and action. The temperate man trains himself, by acts of mortification, lest he ‘go soft’ from catering to bodily appetites. This fourth cardinal virtue safeguards us from commonplace but treacherous pitfalls. “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.”²¹

The Gifted Man

The superman’s constitution is graced by a further and final benefit—the *Gifts* of the Holy Ghost. Without exception, everything supernatural enjoyed by the ‘child of grace,’ is a gift—an out and out donation. However, by way of special emphasis, these endowments are characterized as ‘the gifts.’ The gifts of the Holy Spirit bless the heir to heaven with a certain finesse or refinement of soul, whereby his activity as a superman is made congenial. We might illustrate the function of the gifts, by analogy. To lessen friction and facilitate the running of an engine, we use a lubricant. To diminish hindrances of mind and will, to facilitate the virtuous conduct of

¹⁹ Romans viii. 35.

²⁰ Eccles. xxxvii. 34.

²¹ Matt. v. 8.

the "new man," he is gifted with seven qualities that climax his supernatural efficiency.

It is not accurate to regard these infused gifts, as merely a sevenfold addition or sequel to the moral virtues. The gifts are abilities of an especially high type. They impart a supernatural skill in the practice of virtue. Skill replaces clumsiness with facility. We are not 'at our best' if we find an undertaking irksome: the gifts so influence the mind and will, as to render virtue congenial. The gifts have an efficacy that is prophylactic, to counteract the fumes of worldliness. Thus the theological and moral virtues are stimulated for energetic action. Thus the superman is kept from slumping into religious indifference, and enabled to function with an unearthly enthusiasm.

The most important, the most distinctive advantage enjoyed by the 'gifted man,' is *docility of spirit* under the influence of the Holy Spirit. As a result of this docility, the 'child of grace' is alert of mind and pliant of will—not only able but *disposed* to co-operate with God his Sanctifier. This responsive attitude of mind and will is of the first importance. If a superman fail to cultivate his sevenfold gift, he may live on, but he will fail to thrive religiously. Instead, he will languish, living in poor health—not only discontented, but highly susceptible to mortal illness. Every 'child of grace' is a career man in the sense that he is destined to become a saint—a *very* holy person. This health and joy of soul is not reserved to canonized saints. If average health among us be poor, if saints be the exception rather than the rule, this is traceable to a widespread neglect of those divine gifts which empower us to rise above mediocrity.

Comparatively speaking, it is not often that soldiers of Christ are called upon for service of a heroic type. Heroism was the 'order of the day,' during the periods of Roman persecution. But every now and then there is a flare-up of hostility toward God and His children on earth. Russia, Mexico, Spain, and Germany are up-to-date examples. The same danger can confront American supermen. The probability is that "it will happen here." When put to the test, whom shall we resemble? Simon Peter the coward, or Peter the hero—gifted with perseverance unto death?

The gifts of the Holy Ghost come to us via the human soul of Christ. It is "of His fulness we all have received, and grace for grace."²² "I am the Vine, you are the branches."²³ Referring directly to Christ but indirectly to us, Isaiah foretold: "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding; the spirit of counsel and of fortitude; the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord."²⁴ Of the seven gifts, four benefit the mind, and three improve the will. Knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and counsel are gifts that perfect all intellectual virtues. Piety, fortitude, and fear of the Lord are a like tonic for all virtues of the will. How true of the 'gifted man' are the words of the Apostle: "We have received not the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God!"²⁵ Truly, the 'child of grace' is a "new man,"—a superman, divinely adapted for adoption into the divine family!

The religious health of the superman is provided for with divine ingenuity, by his supernatural constitution or anatomy. It is fascinating to realize how the various elements of that system mesh or dovetail—each with all the rest—in the furtherance of religious, organic health. However, organic health is only a partial factor—it needs completion by functional health. Habitual Grace equips us with a constitution: by means of Actual Grace, that organism functions.

It is one thing to understand religious health as it is 'on paper,' and quite another to appreciate that health as a personal experience. The child of God should have an education in grace that is not only theoretical but also experimental. With a view to the actual maintenance of religious health, a thorough knowledge of grace is a wise investment. A sad percentage of neglect, within the sphere of supernatural health, is due to ignorance of our religious make-up. Solicitude is in proportion to appreciation. Supernatural maturity postulates that we *live* a life of grace: we cannot do so successfully, unless we first *know* that life. Superficial education would liken us to the man who, "beholding his own countenance in a glass . . . went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was."²⁶

²² John i. 16.

²³ John xv. 5.

²⁴ Isaiah xi. 2, 3.

²⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

²⁶ James i. 23, 24.

Questions

- 1. Explain thoroughly the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.**
- 2. Why is it that faith and hope are temporary virtues?**
- 3. What is meant when we classify faith, hope, and charity as theological virtues?**
- 4. What is the difference between a theological virtue and a moral virtue? Illustrate your point, in connection with the virtue of justice.**
- 5. Explain thoroughly the virtues of prudence and justice.**
- 6. Explain thoroughly the virtues of fortitude and temperance.**
- 7. Why are the moral virtues called cardinal virtues? Show the relationship between the virtues of religion, magnanimity, chastity, and their respective cardinal virtues.**
- 8. What do you understand by the gifts of the Holy Ghost?**
- 9. What is the most distinctive advantage enjoyed by the gifted man?**
- 10. What four gifts are beneficial to the intellectual virtues? What three gifts are a tonic for the will of the superman?**

DIVINE VITAMIN OF THE HUMAN SOUL

Functional Health

LET us recall, very briefly, the connection between organic and functional health. A man enjoys religious health of an organic sort, when his soul is endowed with a supernatural constitution. This constitution gives to the mere man a new whatness and new ability. By habitual grace, he begins to be a superman: by the infused virtues and gifts, he is empowered to operate as a superman. However, this organic soundness calls for the accompaniment of functional soundness. Because the superman's whatness is a new life, it needs nourishment: otherwise, death will ensue. His new abilities need 'fuel' or nutriment, in order to actually operate: otherwise, ability will remain inactive. The psychological nutriment known as Actual Grace, furnishes to the superman his operative or functional soundness. Such, in general, is the relationship between organic and functional health, between habitual grace and actual grace.

Actual Grace

Actual grace may be defined as: A supernatural help, transitory in its action, extended to the soul by God, who thereby enlightens the mind and energizes the will, for action of a supernatural type.

When we indicate actual grace as a help, we imply that with God's help, *we* accomplish something. His help is needed, because the accomplishment is supernatural, yet the success is truly ours.

By means of actual grace, we become functionally sound. Just as truly as in the case of organic soundness, God alone can bestow the benefit. Both donations are, in themselves, strictly supernatural—so 'extra' that God is supremely free to bestow or to withhold, to grant much or little. We are "justified freely by His grace."¹ There is another reason for stressing the superior caliber of grace. Grace—both habitual and actual—is not only divine in itself: it empowers and helps us to act supernaturally. The Apostle testifies to the

¹ Romans iii. 24.

divine caliber of his organic and functional soundness: "But by the grace of God, I am *what* I am. His grace in me hath not been void, but I have *labored abundantly*—yet not I, but the grace of God with me."² With blunt frankness, he reminded the Corinthians: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received?"³

Actual grace is transitory in its influence. In contrast, habitual grace is a permanent endowment. By analogy, we illustrate the difference. The human body is permanent: we supply it with food now and then, whenever advisable—transitorily. God dispenses actual grace to the superman, as often as it is providential to do so.

Actual grace, although a divine help, is adapted to the human soul. There are two powers or faculties of the soul—the intellect and the will. As explained in the preceding chapter, supernatural virtues of an intellectual sort grace us with the mind of a superman, just as other appropriate virtues grace us with the will of a superman. By actual grace, these virtues are 'set in operation.' Hence, the action of actual grace is twofold: it enlightens the mind, and energizes the will.⁴ Referring to thought of a supernatural type St. Paul affirms: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God."⁵ Men of good will are assisted by actual grace, both to form a supernatural attitude of will, and to carry out any such determination: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish."⁶

Conduits of Grace

In general, a conduit is a means for conducting or conveying something from one point to another. In transmitting grace, God 'adapts' Himself to us. Grace is for the soul; but the human soul, in its thought and love, depends upon a bodily partner. For example, material for thought and love is furnished to the soul by what we read with our eyes and hear

² 1 Cor. xv. 10.

⁴ Consult diagram.

⁶ Phil. ii. 13.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 7.

⁵ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

with our ears, and so on. This is why God often imparts divine light to the mind and divine energy to the will, indirectly—through some created agency. We read of “a certain woman named Lydia . . . whose heart the Lord opened to attend to those things that were said by Paul.”⁷ The preaching of the Apostle was a conduit of grace: the grace itself was God’s action upon the will of Lydia. The sacraments were instituted by Christ as conduits for both habitual and actual grace. The sacraments are not only signs of grace, but effective signs, inasmuch as they confer the grace they signify. Our divine Saviour so planned that the sacraments would consist of internal and external elements. The internal element is grace: the external element is the efficacious sign of grace. We find in the case of the sacraments, a unique accommodation or adaptation on the part of God, as regards our human make-up. The sacraments are conduits of grace that are perceivable in a human way; thus we are notified and assured of the reception of internal grace. As we shall explain in a later discussion, the sacraments are reliable in a way that no other conduit is.

Actual grace has many conduits. It may be ‘tucked into the pages’ of a worth-while book: it may contact us through the good example of some associate, during business or recreation. We hear people say, in words to this effect: “That mission was a grace!” “That narrow escape of mine from death was providential. It made me think betimes about my hereafter. It was a grace ‘in disguise.’” Strictly speaking, a book, a sermon and the like are not graces. Such things are but the external conduits of internal grace. Grace acts upon the soul in secret, within the ‘privacy of the mind and heart.’ During the course of a sermon, for example, we hear whispers of conscience that chide us, we experience flashes of attraction toward virtue, a glowing insight of some mystery of faith, an impulse to be generous with God. Action of this sort upon the mind and will, is actual grace. The preaching of God’s word is the conduit.

It does not follow that God conveys grace to us, only through some external agency. His influence upon mind and

⁷ Acts xvi. 14.

will can reach us directly, and often does. Nevertheless, conduits are providential occasions of grace. Hence, we do wisely to avail ourselves, with frequency and regularity, of such opportunities for grace. Indeed, it is not far-fetched to say that, this pamphlet may be a conduit of grace for those who study it earnestly. To neglect external religious influences, whether in a church or elsewhere, is to deprive oneself of providential contact with grace. Supermen who appreciate their vocation are thrifty. A child of God cannot ignore his appetite for grace, and expect either health of soul or peaceful joy.

Habitual grace, too, is imparted by external means. For example, when original sin is expelled from the soul, the sacramental externals of Baptism are conduits of habitual grace, as well as actual. Undoubtedly, the sacraments are the best means at our disposal, for attainment to grace. However, they are not the only means. We should be well informed concerning all conduits that transmit grace. There are circumstances when we cannot fit ourselves for the reception of sacramental grace, unless aided previously by non-sacramental grace. For example, suppose a non-Catholic is about to enter the Church. He cannot even apply sincerely for admission into the Church, unless aided by an actual grace that is preliminary. This actual grace prepares him for the reception of Baptism. When the convert receives Baptism, and then other sacraments, he receives both habitual grace and actual grace—*sacramentally*. However, that preliminary and indispensable grace is transmitted to him by a *non-sacramental* conduit.

During our career as Catholics, from Baptism onward, we receive countless graces. More often than not, grace is imparted to us by means of some conduit. Consequently, we ought to cultivate an attitude of alertness toward these opportunities, whether sacramental or non-sacramental. We should not be content with a bare minimum of grace. Opportunities for grace are not—so to speak—spaced apart, like annual Confession or even like daily Communion. In the case of branches united to their vine-root, it is only normal that they enjoy constantly, the vital influence with emanates from the root. Christ is the Vine, we are the branches.⁸ Trans-

⁸ *Christ, the Life of the Soul*, Marmion, O.S.B.

mission of grace from Him to us is hindered, not only by our failure to co-operate, but also by our want of awareness as to the conduits of grace.

Grace as a Vitamin

A vitamin, as we have stated, is an ingredient essential to nourishment, and hence requisite for health and life. For bodily nourishment, diet is plotted out according to vitamins, for the simple reason that we *assimilate* whatever we eat. Assimilation is a process whereby we digest food, and transform it into our bodily substance. The important feature of assimilation is this—we become healthy or unhealthy according to the quality of our intake.

Actual grace is a psychological vitamin, essential for supernatural health of soul. The soul assimilates grace—‘digesting’ it by co-operation, ‘taking over’ this divine help and making it the soul’s very own. The superman thrives or languishes, according to his assimilation of this nutriment.

For bodily health, there are several vitamins—some promotive of fat, others of bone, and so on. Diet regulates our vitamin-intake, according to individual need. The vitamins of grace are adapted to the mind and will, and are promotive of every virtue proper to the superman. The child of God should assimilate all the benefits of grace, in order that health of soul be well balanced. He should not develop in such a way as to be ‘level-headed, yet heartless,’ or ‘all heart and no head.’ The diet of grace, as prescribed for the soul by our divine Physician, enables the superman to “grow up in all things, unto a perfect man.”⁹

The principal benefit derived from the vitamin of grace is positive—the *upbuilding* of our religious health. Very often, this vitamin is a benefit to us in a negative way also—by counteracting the germs of sin. For those actually infected, grace is an antidote that expels sin. If ‘inoculation’ with grace be timely, contagion by sin is warded off. Timely recourse to the vitamin of grace, is what physicians would call ‘preventive’ medication. The superman who appreciates his health of soul is attentive and docile, under the tender care of the Physician “Who is able to preserve you without sin.”¹⁰

⁹ Ephesians iv. 13, 15.

¹⁰ Jude i. 24.

We might say that every ailment of soul to which we succumb, every breakdown of religious health is traceable to one root-cause—namely, malnutrition. Yet there is no shortage of grace, for “the grace of God, by Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And where sin abounded, grace did more abound.”¹¹ Moreover, this vitamin-antidote is reliable, no matter what the emergency, for “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.”¹² How true it is that grace as a vitamin is the *controlling factor* in the maintenance of supernatural health! “And we helping, do exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain!”¹³

The Vitamin of Saints

To the man of supernatural destiny, religious health is a matter of life and death. Yet, it happens only too often that our appetite for grace is dull, that our co-operation is fitful. Such would not be the case, did we realize our dependence on grace, and upon God as its Donor.

To emphasize our need of grace, the Apostle resorts to strenuous language. He uses the term ‘charity,’ as a synonym for habitual grace—the wellspring of charity. He declares that even if he be as eloquent as an angel, or as courageous as a martyr, though he become penniless in feeding the poor—all is futile, without grace. “It profiteth me nothing.”¹⁴

When we stress our utter dependence upon the vitamin of grace, we do not imply that this divine influence is so predominant, as to render the superman a mere automaton or ‘puppet.’ For the success of X, it may be indispensably necessary that Y assist him from start to finish—financially, or in an advisory capacity, whatever the case may be. However, in reply to the question, who succeeds? the true answer is, with Y’s help, X is successful. Similarly, grace is indispensable for thought, love, and joy of a *divine* type on *our* part. By way of preliminary help, grace enlightens the mind and induces the will to act: grace then accompanies the action of the superman until complete success is achieved. It is a case of partnership, of joint action between God and the super-

¹¹ Romans v. 15, 20.
¹³ 2 Cor. vi. 1.

¹² Phil. ii. 13.
¹⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3.

man—"the grace of God with me."¹⁵ The vitamin of grace does not compel us to act—it *impels* or *propels*.

The Councils of the Church anathematize anyone who is so arrogant, as to deny his need of grace for heaven.¹⁶ In words to this effect, the Council of Trent declares: If anyone claim that without the help of actual grace, a man can believe, hope, love, or repent in a way conducive to the attainment of habitual grace, let him be anathema!¹⁷ Similarly, the Second Council of Orange: Reward is indeed due to good works, if they be done: but grace which is not due, precedes them—making it possible that they be done.¹⁸ Simply because supernatural success is of divine caliber, even God cannot condition us as supermen, without the improvements of grace. "And if by grace, it is not now by (human) works: otherwise grace is no more grace."¹⁹

As supermen, we depend not only on grace, but also upon God as the Donor. Because grace is an out and out gift, we depend on the good pleasure and mercy of our Benefactor. Our vocation as 'men of grace' was a sheer gift when extended originally to the First Adam and his offspring. When recovered for us by the Second Adam, it became even a gift of mercy. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy. Therefore, He hath mercy on whom He will."²⁰ Were it not for the mercy of God as a Donor, we would still be "children of wrath."²¹

By conceding the gratuity called grace, God is unto us the "author and finisher"²² of heavenly success. He is the "God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus," and who "will Himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you."²³ Our divine Saviour spoke forcibly of our need of Him. He supposes our equipment with organic health of soul: He refers directly to our need of grace as a vitamin, for functional health. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine: you the branches.

15 1 Cor. xv. 10.

17 Session vi., Canon 3.

20 Romans ix. 16, 18.

23 1 Peter v. 10.

16 To anathematize, is to condemn as heretical.

18 Canon 18.

21 Ephesians ii. 3.

19 Romans xi. 6.

22 Hebrews xii. 2.

He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without Me you can do *nothing!*"²⁴ Truly then, we are paupers—naturally destitute of the supernatural, dependent on the charity and mercy of God. It is not beneath a pauper to beg—in fact, St. James affirms: "You have not, because you ask not."²⁵

The vitamin of grace was the telling factor that transformed Saul the fanatic into Paul the Apostle, and Augustine the libertine into Augustine the Saint. The vitamin of grace sanctifies a king upon his throne,²⁶ or a lumberjack in overalls.²⁷ If we disdain the gift of grace, we snub the Donor Himself. But the vitamin of grace is never wasted, for God transfers grace from the ungrateful to the grateful. At times, the gracious designs of God seem to be impeded by men: but God is never thwarted, really.²⁸ By the transfer of grace, He maintains this divine vitamin in circulation among human souls. "Therefore, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof."²⁹ As with entire nations, so, too, with individuals: for example, grace was withdrawn from Judas Iscariot, and given to Matthias. As the 'chosen people' of the New Testament, it behooves us supermen to co-operate with the vitamin of grace, that "the God of peace may Himself sanctify you in all things: that your whole spirit, and soul and body, may be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."³⁰

Questions

1. Define actual grace. Quote St. Paul, testifying to his organic and functional health of soul.
2. In general, what is a conduit? What two classes of conduits are there, for the transmission of grace? Explain, and illustrate by examples, how the conduits of grace function.

²⁴ John xv. 4, 5.

²⁵ James iv. 2.

²⁶ Edward the Confessor of England, Louix IX of France.

²⁷ Matt Talbot.

²⁸ "Fidelity to Grace Received," Fidelis Stone, C.P., Harvard University Commencement Address, 1897.

²⁹ Matt. xxi. 43.

³⁰ I. Thess. v. 23.

3. Explain the process called assimilation. In what sense does the soul assimilate the vitamin of grace?
4. How does the vitamin of grace serve as an antidote? Explain the positive aspect of grace as a vitamin. In the sphere of grace, what is preventive medication?
5. Explain thoroughly our dependence upon grace, including apt quotations from Scripture.
6. Can God Himself condition us as supermen, without grace? If not, why not?
7. Does the influence of grace compel us to act virtuously? In view of the fact that we depend on grace from start to finish, do we deserve credit for a virtuous life?
8. What do we mean, precisely, when we say that grace is a donation? What is the further implication when we insist that grace is a gift of mercy?
9. Show how grace as a vitamin is the controlling factor in the maintenance of supernatural health.
10. Explain what is meant by the transfer of grace.

THE RESULTS OF GRACE

"Good Tidings of Great Joy"

IN sketching a pen-picture of the superman, we have thus far dwelt upon his organic health, as rounded out by functional health. The "new man's" religious constitution consists of habitual grace, plus infused virtues, plus the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This supernatural 'system' is nourished, actually operated by actual grace. However, we have yet to dwell upon another feature of the superman's picture—a detail that is really the acme of everything else. We refer to the results—or, better still—the fruits of grace. Organic and functional health are not—so to speak—sterile: they beget gratification.

As we stated in a previous discussion, human powers are at the same time appetites. Our bodily powers function for a definite purpose—to gratify their respective appetites—to enjoy food, music, beauty, and so on. The soul functions in quest of true goodness. The mind is gratified by attainment to truth, and the will by a possessive contact with goodness. Now the superior powers of the "new man" are refined appetites that crave satisfaction of a heavenly sort. By knowing God thoroughly, by loving Him ardently, the child of God is gratified. Even on earth, the fruit of grace is an unearthly peace of soul: in heaven, the soul is overjoyed—gratified to capacity. "That My joy be in you, and that your joy may be filled."¹

By means of lesser graces, the superman is empowered to know and to love the Supreme Grace: thus, too, he is *appetized* to *enjoy* that Supreme Grace. The Supreme Grace is God known, loved, and *enjoyed*. But the enjoyment of God is not a vague sort of beatitude—it consists of a joy that appeals mutually to God and to us. As supermen, we are destined to enjoy God as our Friend, our Father, our 'ancestral' Benefactor, as the Guest of our souls. Reciprocally, God will enjoy us as His friends, His sons by adoption, His heirs, and as His hosts.² Think of it! Mutual, intimate joy between His Divine Majesty and ourselves, whom He has raised from the dust of nothingness! This domestic joy of God and His saints is

¹ John xv. 11.

² *Marvels of Grace*, Many, S.S., Bruce Co.

the climax of our supernatural destiny. This beatitude begins to come true in the Church Militant: in the Church Triumphant, it becomes flawless and unlosable. The fruit of grace is signalized by the *Magnificat* of Mary, whose soul is "full of grace."³ We, too, have solid reason to enthuse, and to proclaim: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me!"⁴

Partakers of Divine Nature

In order that we become supermen, the God who created us as mere men, must elevate us to a supernatural status. This process can be indicated by several terms—it is a promotion, an elevation, a transformation. Since this transformation is definitely of a religious type, the most accurate term is *justification*. Justification is a process whereby God fits us to live and prosper on a supernatural or divine scale. Logically, this type of life and prosperity is essentially religious—God imparts it to us, we live and prosper by being *Godlike*. A man is said to be supernaturally just, or justified, when he is all that a superman should be. Normal relationship between God and man postulates organic health, functional health, and the results or fruits of grace.

In promoting us as supermen, in justifying us, the very first item bestowed by God is organic health. As already explained, this fundamental donation consists of a supernatural whatness, plus appropriate efficiency. Thus we are made *partakers of the divine nature*. And since a nature is the well-spring of ability, we partake at the same time, of divine virtues and gifts. Precisely because we are partakers in the divine nature and efficiency, we function by means of a divine vitamin—actual grace. Precisely because we are participants in the nature and efficiency of God, we gain results and enjoy fruits of a divine sort. The results of grace are sublime, the fruits of grace are so enjoyable, because of the fecundity⁵ of God's nature—which we supermen share.

Referring to "all things that appertain to godliness," St.

³ Luke i. 28.

⁵ Fecundity means fruitfulness, productiveness.

⁴ Luke i. 46, 47, 49.

Peter points to Christ, through whom God "hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature."⁶ It is by habitual grace that our participation in the divine nature comes true. Habitual grace is the divine quality that transforms the soul, endowing us with a superior whatness, whereby we become Godlike. The superman remains finite—he does not become divine, but divinelike. He retains his own individuality—he does not become God, but like unto God. This supernatural resemblance God spoke of when He announced: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness."⁷ In the case of mere men, there is some resemblance to God, for man has a spiritual soul. But in the soul of the superman, this resemblance is deepened. Our supernatural likeness to God is so remarkable that, no human word is adequately descriptive.

In any endeavor to estimate the whatness of the superman, we can consider his virtuous abilities as a gauge. Abilities are related to a nature, as flowers to seed. "Whosoever is born of God His seed abideth in him."⁸ If the superman's ability be Godlike, so is his nature. St. John explains: "We shall *be like to Him*, because we shall *see Him as He is*."⁹ To see God "as He is," calls for divine or supernatural understanding. No one can boast of that, unless he be either God Himself, or a partaker of the divine nature. To the point, we might invert the order of St. John's testimony, and state: Because we *can see* God "as He is," we must be "*like to Him*."

Although the superman has only a share in the divine nature, his participation is none the less real. To explain, let us resort to analogy. Of an inventor, I can have three kinds of knowledge. I may have some notion of him, from an inspection of his handiwork. I can come to know him better still, through the testimony of someone who knows him intimately. Best of all, I can meet him face to face, thus learning for myself what he is like. In this way, I come to know him as he really is, and not merely as he has been represented by someone else, or by his inventive output. We now apply the analogy. The mere man can appreciate God, only through

⁶ 2 Peter i. 3, 4.

⁸ 1 John iii. 9.

⁷ Genesis i. 26.

⁹ 1 John iii. 2.

the 'workmanship' of creation. Unless such a man be unusually thoughtful, the probability is that he will fail to esteem God, even on that basis. The superman knows God, not only in the same way as the mere man, but better still—through the testimony called Revelation. By Revelation, God imparts to the superman a preview of Himself, of heaven, and of his destiny. In heaven, the superman will meet God "face to face."¹⁰ He will know God with the same directness and intimacy, wherewith God esteems Himself. His love and enjoyment of God will be in proportion. He will "rejoice with joy unspeakable,"¹¹ because he will have developed as a *partaker of the divine nature*. The superman will be happy, as surely and as long as God is happy.

"I shall be like unto the Most High!"¹² Such was the ambition of Lucifer—a sinful ambition, because he sought to exalt himself by deposing God. When man and woman sinned originally, they were duped by an appeal to the same type of ambition. "No, you shall not die the death. You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil!"¹³ God alone can invite a creature to become Godlike. He alone can impart a resemblance to Himself. He does so by elevating us to the rank of supermen. As a basis for divine prosperity, He makes us "partakers of the divine nature."¹⁴

Friends of God

As a result of participation in God's nature and efficiency, we supermen begin to experience a manifold joy. Let us consider, first of all, our privileged joy as friends of God. Echoing the voice of God revealing, the Council of Trent refers to friendship between God and supermen, as a normal outcome of justification. "Having therefore been thus justified, and made the friends and domestics of God, advancing from virtue to virtue, they are renewed, as the Apostle says, day by day."¹⁵ Our divine Lord declares this friendship, and points to His revelation of divine secrets, as a manifestation thereof. "I will not now call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all

10 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

11 1 Peter i. 8.

12 Isaias xiv. 14.

13 Genesis iii. 4, 5.

14 2 Peter i. 4.

15 Session 6, Chapter 10.

things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you.”¹⁶

Friendship is a mutual attitude of affectionate devotion, based upon mutual esteem. Friendship is bilateral: both parties must have attractive qualities. In this respect, strict equality is not necessary. But there must be some proportion between the excellence of one friend and that of the other. This excellence is the basis for esteem, and for the love that follows upon esteem. Friendship between God and a mere man would be grotesque. But owing to the superman's share in the divine nature, he resembles God to a supernatural extent: God can esteem the ‘man of grace.’

A true friend is willing to do his utmost in our behalf. This attitude of will is known as the love of benevolence,—of good will. In response to “men of good will,”¹⁷ God manifests His benevolence by guaranteeing that the “peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts.”¹⁸ In this mutual benevolence, it is God who takes the initiative, “because God first hath loved us.”¹⁹ Of His love for us, there is no room for doubt: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends!”²⁰ In return, He expects our love, manifested by fidelity. “Give Me thy heart!”²¹ “You are My friends, if you do the things that I command you.”²² Thus we become of ‘one mind and heart’ with God.

Sons—Joint Heirs With Christ²³

As a result of creation by God, we are creatures—mere men. As a result of justification by God, we are supermen—His sons. Since we are not divine, we cannot be natural sons of God. By permitting us to share in His divine nature, God fits us for adoption. Among men, adoption is arranged by a technicality of law, known as ‘legalized fiction.’ Thereby an ‘outsider’ is declared to be ‘one of the family.’ In the case of supermen, there is more than a declaration on God's part. “Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be *called*, and should *be* the sons of

¹⁶ John xv. 15.

¹⁹ 1 John iv. 10, 19.

²² John xv. 14.

¹⁷ Luke ii. 14.

²⁰ John xv. 13.

²³ *The Spiritual Life*, Tanqueray, S.S.

¹⁸ Col. iii. 15.

²¹ Proverbs xxiii. 26.

God!"²⁴ By means of grace, He so reconditions us that, in a unique sense, we are begotten or generated. By human generation, we originate from our natural parents. By grace, we again originate—this time from God as the Supreme Grace, who imparts to us a share of His own divine life. Hence, we are not merely 'declared' into the divine family: in so far as possible, we are generated. In the words of St. Peter, we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible"²⁵—that is to say, spiritually, supernaturally. We are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."²⁶

The reality of this sonship is manifest from our filial duties and privileges, as revealed by God. "Like father, like son"—to foster the resemblance between ourselves and God, conduct should be consistent with our dignity. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children."²⁷ There is no doubt as to what the Apostle meant, for Christ Himself had declared: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."²⁸ We are privileged to address God as "our Father who art in heaven."²⁹ We co-operate—Father and son—after the manner of Senior and junior partners, in the furtherance of mutual prosperity. Our service of Him is not servile, but filial. "For you have not received the spirit of bondage, in fear, but the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba (Father)!"³⁰ Truly, God 'fathers' us with divine affection: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee!"³¹

A father imparts to his child, not only life itself but many other things that are fruitful of joy. In relation to the child, the father is an *ancestral* benefactor: the child who receives an ancestral estate, is an heir. If the father have a son who is his very own, that son inherits on the basis of real kinship. An adopted child, too—even though on a basis of concession—enjoys the title and advantages of a son. In particular, he enjoys the right of inheritance.

24 1 John iii. 1.

27 Ephesians v. 1.

30 Romans viii. 15.

25 1 Peter i. 23.

28 Matt. v. 48.

31 Isaiah xlix. 15.

26 John i. 13.

29 Matt. vii. 9.

Our Father in heaven has a Son who is His very own. The name of that Son is Jesus Christ. His eternal Father identified Him, by a testimony direct from heaven: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."³² Of that same eternal Father, we are sons by adoption. "Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also through God."³³ Therefore, Christ is our Brother, "the firstborn amongst many brethren."³⁴ With Him, we are joint-heirs, on the basis of brotherhood. There is, moreover, another factor, bonding us with Christ as joint-heirs. We adopted sons turned prodigal, and thereby forfeited our title to divine inheritance. To redeem that title, Christ our Brother sacrificed His life. Thus He atoned for us and merited our restoration as heirs-eternal—"heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."³⁵

Because of our membership in the divine family, we are the objects of divine solicitude. God did not become incarnate for the sake of mere men. "The Son of God, the only-begotten according to (divine) nature, by a marvelous condescension, has become Son of Man that, we who are sons of men by nature, might become sons of God by grace."³⁶ Nor did the God-Man sacrifice His sacred life, to redeem mere creatures. "He is not ashamed to call them brethren."³⁷ We can boast of God as our Father and of the God-Man as our Brother, because their Spirit is the Source of our own supernatural life. "Whomsoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."³⁸ As the body is animated by the human soul, so too the soul is animated supernaturally by grace. Hence, our Father in heaven exhorts us: "Thou, therefore, My son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus."³⁹ As heirs of God, we should develop even here and now, a becoming maturity of soul. We do so by co-operation with Christ our Brother, with whom we are joint-heirs. We depend upon Him, for "to every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ."⁴⁰ The superman who appreciates his adoption by God, echoes the prayer

32 Matt. iii. 17.

35 Romans viii. 17.

38 Romans viii. 14.

33 Gal. iv. 7.

36 *City of God*, St. Augustine.

39 2 Tim. ii. 1.

34 Romans viii. 29.

37 Hebrews ii. 11.

40 Ephesians iv. 7.

of St. Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy, hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ . . . unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that cannot fade, reserved in heaven for you!" ⁴¹

Our Divine Guest

Among the many joys of which grace is fruitful, the climax is attained when we extend to God as a divine Guest, the hospitality of our own soul. When we say that God dwells in the soul of the superman, we mean it literally. This remarkable indwelling of the Blessed Trinity is the most enjoyable fruit of justification. In heaven, the mutual joy of Guest and host will be perfected. On earth, the 'man of grace' enjoys a foretaste of this happiness—'heaven on earth,' we might call it.

Such intimacy between God and ourselves is not fanciful, but real. It is not 'too good to be true.' "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? The temple of God is holy, which you are." ⁴² It is supernatural holiness that fits the human soul as a habitation for God. By grace, the superman is qualified as a host, for the entertainment of his divine Guest. "If anyone love Me, My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him." ⁴³ All lesser graces—whether habitual or actual—fit the soul as an abode for the Supreme Grace Himself. Using the term 'charity' as a synonym for lesser grace, the Apostle assures us: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who (also) is given to us!" ⁴⁴ In other words, the Donor of grace gives Himself as the final and Supreme Gift.

Just how does God give Himself to us, precisely as a Guest? How does this divine indwelling take place? St. Thomas Aquinas says that, God is in the soul in the way that a well-known person is in the mind of the knower, in the way that a loved one is in the will of the lover. Among men, this kind of presence or indwelling is an every-day experience,

⁴¹ 1 Peter i. 3, 4.

⁴³ John xiv. 23.

⁴² 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

⁴⁴ Romans v. 5.

whether we advert to it or not. In this spiritual way—yet none the less really—we can be present to one another, house one another in our souls, thus possessing one another.

A mother, for example, can possess and enjoy her child in two ways. She clasps the child to her bosom, feasts her eyes upon him, shelters him by means of four walls and a roof. Spiritually, the mother holds fast to the child by means of mind and heart—an embrace that even death cannot loosen! Thus too, that child is enshrined in his mother's soul—he dwells there as an occupant, a guest.

Now our Divine Guest is a Spirit. He comes to us and we receive Him in a spiritual way—via the mind and will. Thus He dwells in our soul, expectant of our religious hospitality, expectant that we treat Him as an attentive host should. How many supermen realize that God is their Guest? “Indeed the Lord is in this place and I knew it not! This is no other but the House of God!” ⁴⁵

The dwelling of God in our soul does not render His Eucharistic Presence superfluous. God is so provident toward supermen that He comes to us in as many ways as divine ingenuity can devise. He dwelt in our midst as a God-Man. He still resides in our tabernacles, Eucharistically. Were He ‘out of sight,’ there is danger He might be ‘out of mind.’ By means of His incarnation, by means of the Eucharist, He has kept ‘in sight.’ But it is His ultimate purpose, it is our divine privilege that He be kept ‘in mind.’ Unless we forbid Him, He will dwell not only in a neighborhood like Palestine, not only in a Eucharistic tabernacle, but in the ciborium of the human soul. Unless we tire of Him, He will remain with us not only a Eucharistic half-hour, not only thirty-three years, but twenty-four hours of every day! A welcome guest may be at times ‘out of sight’ but never ‘out of mind.’ If we treasure God as an ideal Friend, as an adorable and bounteous Father, we shall find it ‘heaven on earth’ to enshrine Him in the temple of our soul, to entertain Him as our Guest of Honor. “Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” ⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Genesis xxviii. 16, 17.

⁴⁶ Apoc. iii. 20.

Questions

1. Explain why it is that organic and functional health tend to beget gratification. What four-point joy is destined for the superman?
2. Define justification. Why is this term so appropriate?
3. In the process of justification, what is the first item bestowed by God? Explain what this transformation consists of.
4. How does St. John establish the fact of our share in the divine nature? Explain the force of his statement, by resort to a threefold analogy.
5. Define friendship. What are the requisites for friendship? What do you understand by a love of benevolence?
6. What is the difference between legal adoption, and our adoption as sons of God?
7. As sons of God, what duties do we have? what privileges?
8. Can you prove that Christ is our Brother? Why are we not only heirs of God, but likewise joint-heirs with Christ?
9. What Revelation do you recall, concerning God as the Guest of our soul? How does St. Thomas Aquinas explain this divine indwelling? How do you illustrate it by analogy?
10. Is there any connection between the presence of God in our soul, and His Eucharistic presence, and His presence in Palestine as God-Man?

OUR DIVINE PHYSICIAN

Emergency

THE case history of the human family has been revealed by God, and recorded by His inspired secretaries. From that record we learn that the world is a vast hospital. All men and woman are patients. Our *basic* malady is religious. Health of soul is so essential that if bereft of this health, our plight is desperate. Even after recovery from the infection of original sin, there is constant danger of relapse into personal sin. This emergency lasts from birth until temporary death of the body. The medication called for is divine grace. Without grace, man is below par and puny. As a mere man, his soul is devitalized—supernaturally dead. Grace alone restores man to normal life. With grace, man ‘surpasses himself,’ and is supernatural—Godlike. In our case history, God revealed not only a diagnosis. He promised to send a competent Physician—a Specialist in grace, so that “where sin abounded, grace did more abound.”¹

Technique

As a God-Man, our Physician is ideally fitted to minister to our needs. In treating us patients, He observes a technique that is divinely skillful. Were He to content Himself in correcting mere *natural* disorders of body and soul, His treatment would be superficial. In accord with revealed diagnosis, He corrects our *supernatural* disorder of soul, as the root-cause of all distress. If patients can be induced to co-operate by seeking “first the Kingdom of God and His justice,” then in due course all else “shall be added.”²

We must co-operate with our divine Physician, for He will not cure an unwilling patient. Having made us free, He does not force us. Although we are patients, we are not unconscious. We can think for ourselves, we are self-decisive. When the time came, He spent three hours upon the cross of atonement. Beforehand, He spent three years in teaching us the significance of His ‘blood transfusion,’ in educating us as to our emergency of soul. Thus He seeks a co-operation that is free and intelligent.

¹ Romans v. 20.

² Matt. vi. 33.

Blood Transfusion

It does not detract from the forgivingness of God, that He insisted on atonement. In justice, offensive man owed reparation to God offended. Moreover, had God waived expiation for human sin, it would have 'eased the way' for future lapses. Atonement must be made, but adequate atonement was beyond man's competence. Guilty man is finite, God is infinite. Only a divine Person could exercise infinite influence in heaven. But how could a *divine* Person suffer in expiation? To atone divinely, one must be both human and divine! Truly a hopeless dilemma, were it not for God's wisdom, might, and love! Without ceasing to be divine, God became human also! As a God-Man, He could represent man and do so with divine competence. The God-Man was frail enough to suffer atonement, and was at the same time infinite in dignity.

"Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission."³ If grace were again to vitalize human souls, if the fruits of grace were once more to gladden men, if sinful men were to be restored as supermen, we must receive a unique blood transfusion. "God hath so loved the world, that He hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may not perish, but have life everlasting!"⁴ As our divine Physician, Jesus Christ has donated His own precious blood, to revive us as supermen. "*He* was wounded for *our* iniquities. *He* was bruised for *our* sins."⁵ Thus it is that "according to the riches of His grace, we have redemption through His blood!"⁶ This event took place on Crucifixion Friday. Hewn from a tree that God Himself—on the third day of creation—had planted and blessed, men fashioned a cross. Suspended from that cross, our divine Saviour suffered until body and soul could bear no more. His precious blood ebbed until there was none to flow. Truly, "you are bought with a great price!"⁷ The blood of Jesus Christ is "upon us and upon our children."⁸ We are marked men and women. But we have divine reason to be sanguine—we patients. Because our Physician is Jesus Christ, it is infallible that 'blood will tell'! "Honor the physician for the need thou hast of him, for all healing is from God."⁹

³ Hebrews ix. 22.

⁴ John iii. 16.

⁵ Isaiah liii. 5.

⁶ Ephesians i. 7.

⁷ 1 Cor. vi. 20.

⁸ Matt. xxvii. 25.

⁹ Eccclus. xxxviii. 1, 2.

Altars of Grace

Right order dictates that, prior to our reinstatement as 'men of grace,' atonement be made for our sinful rejection of grace. Hence, the mediation of Christ is a twofold accomplishment. In our behalf, He atones for the sinful past, and merits a virtuous future. Both to atone and to merit, He "hath laid down His life for us."¹⁰ At the expense of His own life-blood, He eliminates sin and transfuses grace. The God-Man is, indeed, a competent Physician—a Specialist in grace.

The sacrifice of Christ is, precisely, a *religious* sacrifice. It is essentially an *act of religion*, a tribute to *God*. Hence, the title of *Priest* is the most appropriate designation of the God-Man. During the Last Supper, Christ our Priest dedicated Himself as a Gift, from men to God. He then offered Himself as a *sacrificial* Gift—to be immolated "even unto death."¹¹ His immolation began in the Garden, and culminated upon the cross—His first altar of grace. On Crucifixion Friday, "about the ninth hour,"¹² Christ our Priest had accomplished His first Mass.

Divinely ingenious in His love toward us, the God-Man provided for the continuance of that sacrifice. We of today can still witness the priestly sacrifice of Christ. We are not—so to speak—'out of contact' with "our high priest of the good things to come."¹³ In the Mass of today, Christ is present in Person. As the Chief Priest, He empowers His human delegate. He has been a real Victim ever since His immolation upon the cross. Daily, "from the rising of the sun even to the going down"¹⁴ He offers Himself, through His ordained delegate, upon the altars of grace. Thus He continues to transfuse the benefits of His redemptive blood. All grace comes to us through Christ our Priest, by the merit of His sacrifice, offered first upon the cross—the first altar of grace. "The fruits of that bloody oblation (upon the cross) are received most plentifully through this unbloody one (upon the Mass altars of today)."¹⁵

10 1 John iii. 16.

11 Matt. xxvi. 38.

12 Matt. xxvii. 46.

13 Hebrews ix. 11.

14 Malachy i. 11.

15 Council of Trent, Session xxii. ch. 2.

God and Man, Incorporated

Because of our kinship with sinful Adam, we enter this world infected with sin—bereft of grace. The God-Man is sinless and “full of grace.”¹⁶ He entered this world as a Second Adam, to undo the harm originated by the First Adam. By kinship with Christ, we become supermen—‘men of grace’ who partake “of his fulness.”¹⁷

The human soul of the God-Man is—so to speak—the reservoir of all grace that God imparts to man. “Think of it! God permits us to nourish our souls with the very same grace, upon which the soul of Christ so thrives!”¹⁸ Truly, then, we are kindred to Christ. In His capacity as the Second Adam of the human family, He declares: “I am come that you may have life, and that you may have it more abundantly.”¹⁹

On the basis of our kinship with Him, as ‘men of grace,’ the God-Man has organized a corporation—the *Christocracy*. This corporation consists of Himself as the Head, and of us as the members. Thus God and man are bonded together, in the God-Man. When we refer to the Christocracy as the *Mystical Body* of Christ, we do not bespeak something unreal, or vague, or abstruse. The Mystical, or Supernatural Body of Christ is just as real, as definite, as understandable as we are, and He is—it consists of Christ and ourselves. “So we being many, are one Body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.”²⁰

Because of the circulation of grace, the Christocracy is athrob with divine vitality. We members derive our grace from Christ, the Head of the Body, to whom we are united as branches to their vine-root. Hence, the Apostle exhorts us: “In all things, grow up in Him who is the Head, from whom the whole Body maketh increase.”²¹ In a Body headed by Christ, the members should resemble Him. We members do conform to Christ our Head, by a faithful assimilation of the vitamin of grace. Thus we foster organic health, and contribute to the well-being of the entire Body. Conformity to

¹⁶ John i. 14.

¹⁷ John i. 16.

¹⁸ “Jesus Christ, the Divine Bridge Builder,” McDonough, C.P., The Paulist Press, p. 19.

¹⁹ John x. 10.

²⁰ Romans xii. 5.

²¹ Ephesians iv. 16.

Christ involves also penitential suffering. Each member of the Mystical Christ must suffer his own 'miniature passion,'—even unto death, in a spirit of atonement. However, death is only temporary. We members, with Christ our risen Head, will enjoy a resurrection, as the first step in a triumphal march from earth to the *World of Tomorrow*. As 'men of grace,' the success of Christ is ours, as well as His.

Arteries

In the Mystical Body, Christ is the Source of our health of soul. By His atonement, our sinful malady is cured: by His merit, our virtuous health is restored. We are justified "by His blood."²² Blood bespeaks arteries. As explained in a previous discussion, the benefits of His redemptive blood are transmitted to us by various conduits. There are some conduits in particular, which are so reliable as carriers of grace that, we liken them to arteries. The seven sacraments are, so to speak, a network of arteries, extending throughout the entire Mystical Body, from Head to members. Thereby we are unified with Christ. By the pulsation or function of these sacramental arteries, the lifestream of grace flows from Him to us.

The sacraments provide for the 'man of grace,' from the first instant of his probation until the moment of final perseverance. There is a remarkable parallel, between the needs of the mere man and those of the superman. As mere men, we must be born: thus we 'get our start' in life, as human beings. We need fit nourishment, regularly. During the period of adolescence, we need special care, in order to build a robust constitution, to acquire a health that will last—even under strain. When ill, we need medicine. When in danger of death, we need extraordinary attention—the physician will then resort even to extreme measures. In order that the human race "increase and multiply,"²³ parents are provided by the union called matrimony. In order that men may live together in harmony, governments are organized to promote the common good.

In general, all sacraments provide grace for supermen.

²² Romans v. 9.

²³ Genesis i. 28.

Each sacrament in particular, provides grace that is adapted to our specific needs. By the grace of *Baptism*, we begin *to be* supermen. Thus we are “born again of water and the Holy Ghost.”²⁴ To the baptized soul, we might apply the words of our Father in Heaven: “Thou art My son: this day have I begotten thee!”²⁵

We partake of the *Holy Eucharist*, as a sacrament of nourishment. In that sacrament, Christ our Head is present in Person. Under the guise of human food, He Himself brings to our soul the nourishment of grace. In this unique sacrament, the apparent conduit of grace is bread and wine: because of the real presence of Christ beneath those appearances, He Himself imparts the nutriment of grace, directly. “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.”²⁶

Members of the Church Militant, must be soldierlike. Merely to be born a superman, is not enough. We cannot afford to be weaklings—we need a supernatural constitution that is hardy, that will not easily succumb to the fumes of worldliness. The grace of *Confirmation* imparts to us the robustness of soul that we need so urgently.

Unfortunately, after recovery from original sin, we relapse into personal sin. The sacrament of *Penance* is an artery of medicinal or curative grace. Our divine Physician realized how susceptible we are to illness of soul. Hence He provided curative grace for venial and even for mortal sin. To leave nothing undone that might safeguard the health of His patients, He has provided also the grace of *Extreme Unction*. By means of this sacrament, the superman in danger of bodily death, is fortified against death of soul.

Matrimony as a sacrament is more than a human contract, more than a parental union. As a contract and as a union, matrimony is thereby *supernaturalized*. As a sacrament, matrimony guarantees grace to husband and wife, thus blessing them divinely as delegates of God in the propagation and education of supermen.

All ‘men of grace,’ of all times—even to the consummation of this world—are provided for, in respect to health of soul,

²⁴ John iii. 5.

²⁵ Psalm ii. 7.

²⁶ John vi. 54.

by a sacrament of fundamental importance. By the sacrament of *Holy Orders*, the Church Universal is graced with a holy priesthood. The grace of Holy Orders enables the priestly delegate of Christ to teach, to govern, and to sanctify the members of the Mystical Body. We depend upon the priestly members of the Church Militant for guidance in faith and morals, and for the administration of the sacraments. Properly understood, we can say that this sacrament is the main artery in the sacramental network. The Holy Eucharist contains the Priest who is God: we depend, however, upon His delegated priests, for actual contact with the Eucharist.

Every sacrament conveys both habitual grace and actual grace. When we already enjoy habitual grace, a sacrament confers an *increase* of organic health. Actual grace, as well as habitual, is characteristic of the sacrament that conveys it. For example, in the sacrament of Penance, we receive actual graces adapted to the personal needs of a repentant soul—for the conquest of temptations, for the shunning of occasions of sin. Whenever we receive a sacrament worthily, at least a minimum of grace is guaranteed. Over and above that minimum, we receive grace in proportion to the worthiness of our dispositions. There are certain sacraments that we receive only once during life on earth—for example, Baptism and Confirmation. However, in any such case, the grace conferred is not short-lived: rather, it is a ‘grace of a lifetime.’ The Holy Spirit graced the Church Universal on Pentecost Sunday, but that grace operates even to the present day. Similarly, our graces of Baptism and Confirmation. “Neglect not the grace that is in thee!”²⁷

Perisphere and Cross

As we bring our study of grace to a close, we exhort you to “walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called.”²⁸ At infinite expense to Himself, the God-Man has recovered our divine birthright. It remains for us to co-operate, for “as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God.”²⁹ Individually, our health of soul—both organic and functional—depends upon ourselves, as “men of

²⁷ 1 Tim. iv. 14.

²⁸ Ephesians iv. 1.

²⁹ John i. 12.

good will.”³⁰ For His part, God assures each of us: “My grace is sufficient for thee.”³¹

We should develop a consciousness of our vocation as ‘men of grace.’ The fruit of this consciousness is a becoming maturity. “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away the things of a child.”³² No adult should behave as a child, nor should a Christian superman live as a mere man. We who serve the King of Hearts realize that the symbol of His *World of Tomorrow*—the pledge of His heaven and ours—is not the perisphere and trylon, but the perisphere surmounted by the cross—the ‘tree of grace’ and the crux of all things.

Questions

1. Why is it appropriate to refer to the God-Man as a Physician, as a Specialist in grace?
2. Why is it true that His treatment of us patients is not superficial?
3. Explain our need of a God-Man, for atonement and for merit.
4. Explain the connection between the Last Supper and the Sacred Passion of Crucifixion Friday, and our present-day altars of grace.
5. In respect to grace, what advantage accrues to us from membership in the Christocracy?
6. What is to be said of the normal conformity between Christ our Head, and ourselves as His members?
7. What seven needs are true of the mere man, during life on earth? How can this enumeration be applied, by way of analogy, to the sacraments?
8. Explain briefly, the function of each of the sacraments as an artery of grace.
9. Do you consider it important that the oppressed Catholics of Europe appreciate their status as ‘men of grace’? why?
10. What did St. Paul say about adult maturity? How do his words apply to ‘men of grace’?

³⁰ Luke ii. 14.

³¹ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

³² 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

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